# Big Business lobbyists real killers of economy—Neri

Story below, Col. 2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, December 16, 2003 ★★★ 48 pages / 4 sections / vol. 19 / no. 8 P15

## PNP starts enforcing Comelec's gun ban

**By Christian V. Esguerra and Cynthia D. Balana**

THE PHILIPPINE National Police yesterday declared a heightened alert status in Metro Manila as it began enforcing the gun ban declared by the Commission on Elections.

Director Avelino Razon, chief of the PNP directorate for operations, said all

PNP/A17

## Misa de Gallo starts

CHURCH bells will start ringing at 4 a.m. today to signal the start of the longest Christmas season in the world, through the traditional dawn Mass.

A Spanish friar was said to have started the Misa de Gallo (literally "Mass of the Rooster") in the 18th century as thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest. The Mass was so timed as to allow farmers to go to work after the ceremony.

The priest also meant the end of the nine-day novena to coincide with the "*noche buena*" celebration during Christ-

MISA/A17

# Saddam fall leads to more arrests

A FOLLOWER of radical Iraqi Shiite cleric Moqtada Al Sadr shoots in the air as he celebrates the capture of Saddam Hussein. REUTERS

## World cheers but asks: What's next?

SINGAPORE—Supporters and opponents of the war in Iraq welcomed the capture of Saddam Hussein but questions about the way forward colored the jubilation, with several nations looking for an early end to the US-led occupation.

France, Russia and Germany, all fierce opponents of the US-led war to oust Saddam, lauded the arrest of the deposed Iraqi leader in an underground hideout.

But many Palestinians, who saw Saddam as a hero, reacted with disbelief and gloom. A leader of the militant Hamas group dubbed the capture an insult to Arabs and Muslims, and predicted that the United States would pay a high price for its action.

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, a man awaiting execution for last year's Bali bombings that killed 202 people said Islamic militants would continue to fight the United States.

"Even if 1,001 Saddam Husseins were arrested it would not weaken our struggle," Ali Ghufron shouted to reporters as he left a court on the resort island.

Asian stocks jumped, gold and bonds

WORLD/A18

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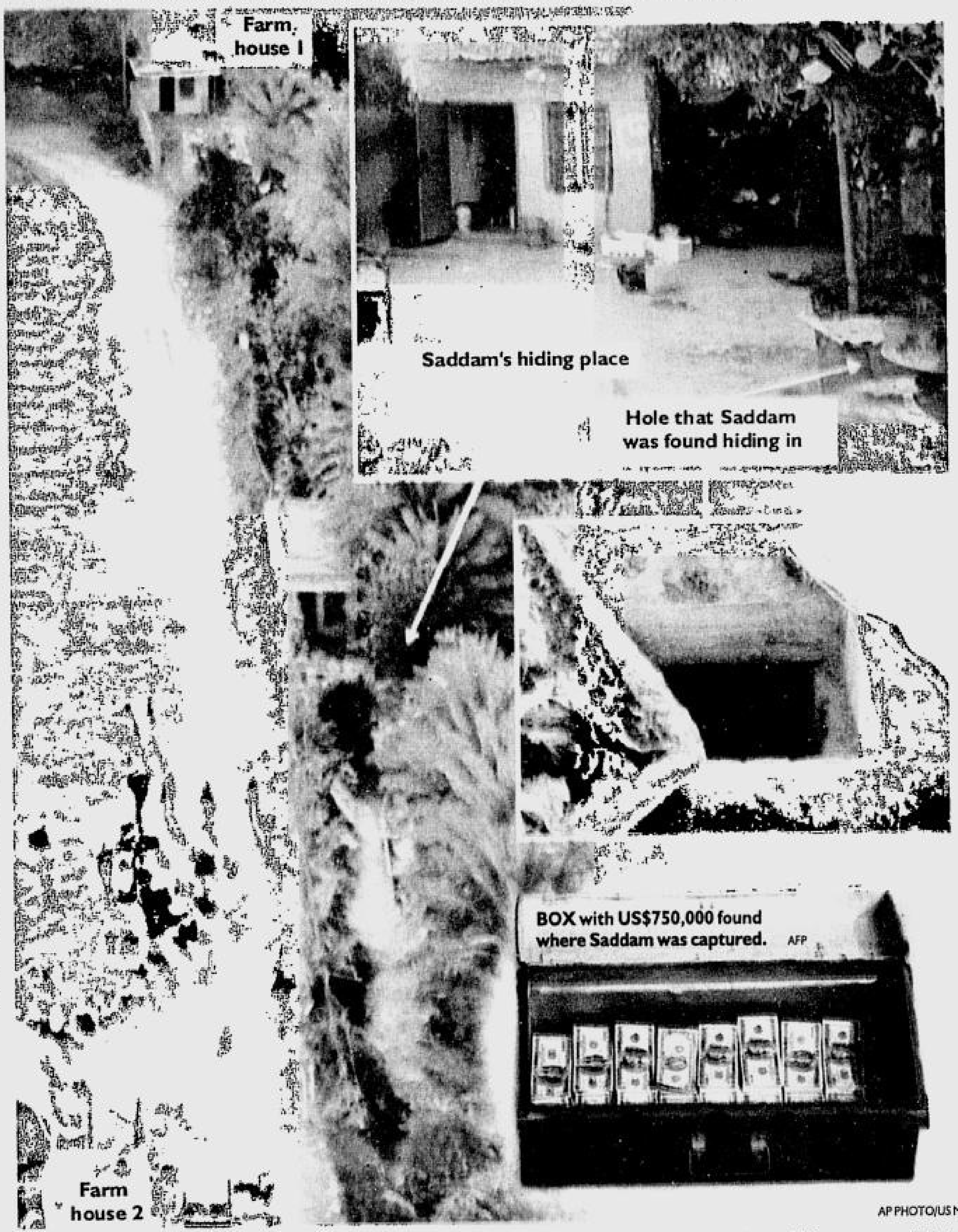
**A HUMILIATING END FOR IRAQ'S ONCE-PROUD DICTATOR**



BOX with US$750,000 found where Saddam was captured. AFP

AP PHOTO/US MILITARY

THIS SERIES of photos, released Sunday, shows where Saddam Hussein was arrested during a raid near his hometown of Tikrit, in northern Iraq. The labels were provided by US military sources. Soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division arrested Saddam on Saturday.

## *But car bomb attacks go on, killing 8 cops, wounding 17*

**BAGHDAD—Saddam Hussein's capture is reaping dividends for the US military, providing intelligence that has led to the arrest of several top regime figures in Baghdad, a US general said Monday.**

US Army Brig. Gen. Mark Hertling of the 1st Armored Division told The Associated Press here that the first round of Saddam's questioning and documents in a briefcase found with him were "connecting the dots" in intelligence on the insurgency.

Since Saddam's capture, US Army teams from the 1st Armored Division have captured one high-ranking former regime figure—who has yet to be identified—and that the prisoner has given up a few others, Hertling said. All the men are currently being interrogated and more raids are expected, he said.

"We've already gleaned intelligence value from his capture," Hertling said. "We've already been able to capture a couple of key individuals here in Baghdad. We've completely confirmed one of the cells. It's putting the pieces together and it's connecting the dots. It has already helped us significantly in Baghdad."

Hertling added: "I'm sure he was giving some guidance to some key figures in this insurgency."

But despite Saddam's arrest, suicide bombers attacked police stations in the capital, as the insurgency showed no sign of letting up.

On Monday, car bombings at police stations in Baghdad left eight policemen dead and at least 17 wounded, police officials said. The deadliest assault was a suicide attack on a station house in northern Baghdad where the eight officers were killed.

Two other car bombings at a station in the west of the city caused seven injuries and additional explosions rocked the city hours later.

SADDAM/A18

## GMA wants hero's burial for Ka Blas

**By Juliet L. Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac**

A HERO'S burial.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has conveyed to the family of the late Foreign Secretary Blas Ople her plan to give the man everyone called "Ka Blas" a state funeral at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, the national heroes' cemetery. Ople's family initially wanted to bury him in his hometown of Hagonoy, Bulacan.

Issuing Proclamation No. 514 from Bahrain, where she was visiting, Ms Macapagal declared Dec. 15 until 21 a "national state of mourning," and ordered flags in all government buildings here and abroad to be flown at half-staff.

Ms Macapagal asked the Armed Forces to give Ople a state funeral at the Libingan "if the Ople family so desires."

In the Senate, where Ople

GMA/A8

## Business lobbyists killing economy—Neri

**By Vincent Cabreza**
*PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

BAGUIO CITY—Following the lead of resigned Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, the government's chief economist yesterday admitted that the 2004 presidential elections could further harm the country's economy.

The unexpected 4.4-percent improvement in the third quarter gross domestic product (GDP) has not been able to mitigate the national budget deficit, said Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

But this time, Neri is blaming big tobacco and alcohol industry interests whose influence in key national elections has scared off politicians from pushing financial reform measures that would have cured the government's uncontrollable deficit.

Neri said the same "vicious cycle" of "booty capitalism" would

BUSINESS/A8

JERRY CARUAL/PCPO MALACAÑANG

PRESIDENT Macapagal accepts a golden gift from King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain during a state dinner held at the Al Rawdha Royal Palace in Manama.

## Gloria: Meeting OFWs part of job

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday defended her meeting with overseas Filipino voters as part of her job as the head of government.

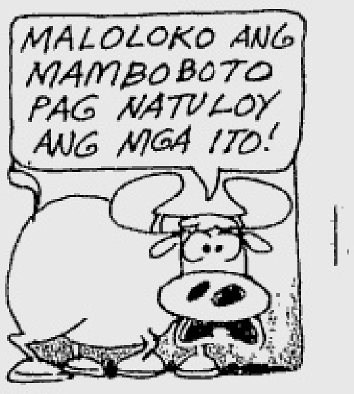
"In all my foreign trips for the past two and a half years, I have always met up with our OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) and embraced them because they represent the goodness, greatness and excellence of our people," the President said in a statement.

Ms Macapagal was reacting to reports that her brief stopover in Hong Kong, where she shook hands with and handed out raffle prizes to Filipinos, appeared she was campaigning for a full presidential term in next year's elections ahead of the authorized period.

Ms Macapagal invoked the Christmas season for her Hong Kong visit en route to her state visit to Bahrain.

She arrived in Manama on Sunday to a red-carpet

GLORIA/A8



MALOLOKO ANG MAMBOBOTO PAG NATULOY ANG MGA ITO!

## *Salve Bush beats FPJ to the draw*

**By Martin P. Marfil**

ONE listed his occupation as "Messiah." Another claimed she maintains relations with US President George W. Bush. A third promised a million pesos each for people without jobs.

The political circus, er, election period, officially

SALVE/A17

**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST: Southern Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with rains especially over the eastern section. Likewise, Mindanao including Palawan will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/16/03

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Metro Manila | Partly Cloudy | Iloilo/Bacolod | Cloudy with Rains |
| Baguio | Partly Cloudy | Roxas | Cloudy with Rains |
| Tuguegarao | Partly Cloudy | Cebu | Cloudy with Rains |
| Laoag | Partly Cloudy | Tacloban | Cloudy with Rains |
| Clark Zone | Partly Cloudy | Gen. Santos | Cloudy with Rains |
| Tagaytay | Partly Cloudy | Zamboanga | Cloudy with Rains |
| Legazpi | Cloudy with Rains | Cagayan de Oro | Cloudy with Rains |
| Calapan | Cloudy with Rains | Davao | Cloudy with Rains |

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# Second FrontPage

## Stop NPA poll tax, GMA orders AFP

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Carlito Pablo

**CALLING IT extortion, President Macapagal Arroyo has ordered the military and police to stop the collection by communist rebels of "permit to campaign" (PTC) fees from candidates in the coming elections.**

The President gave the order in a statement released yesterday by Malacañang, amid reports the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, stood to collect as much as P2.25 billion from candidates campaigning in areas in which the rebels exerted some control.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo said Ms Macapagal expected the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to quickly come up with an operational plan to end the collections.

"The AFP and PNP shall come up with a concrete plan to foil the NPA's extortion activities that would have an impact on the democratic exercise," the President said.

But, Saludo said, "we need the cooperation of the candidates to interdict these efforts by the NPA to interfere with our democratic exercise."

The President said: "I want them to work closely with the candidates in the affected areas to stem this tide of terrorism. The people's right to vote and freedom of choice must be unimpaired at all times."

In Congress, party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales (Akbayan) said yesterday local candidates need not pay PTC fees.

She recommended a two-pronged attack against what she also decried as extortion by the NPA.

First, she said, the military and police must offer protection to the candidates, but "on the condition that the soldiers themselves behave properly."

"The military should behave as protectors because there have been instances where they themselves committed abuses against the people," Rosales said.

Second, she said, there must be "pressure from the Church and civil society."

She said that Church and civil society leaders could work with local government officials as well as the candidates themselves to declare their respective areas "free and honest election zones."

"The NPA should be isolated in these zones," Rosales added.

Rosales and fellow Akbayan Rep. Mario Aguja have authored House Bill 3581, which would declare the imposition of PTC fees by the NPA a criminal act.

The military said the PTC fees range from a low of P50,000 to a high of P300,000 per candidate for local positions up to the level of congressman.

NPA spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal had said the exaction of such fees was as old as the CPP itself, which was founded in 1968.

Rosal said the payment of PTC fees was a recognition of the "political authority" of the CPP-NPA in certain areas.

Rosales said several congressmen have co-sponsored HB 3581.

She said she had approached Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, another party-list congressman, for his views on the bill. Bayan Muna is identified with the mainstream Left.

"I told Satur that since Bayan Muna was an open organization and its members were in the House committee on civil, political and human rights, they should support this measure," Rosales said.

She said she reminded Ocampo that the exaction of PTC fees was a violation of political freedom.

Asked how Ocampo reacted, Rosales said: "He smiled and said '*Oo nga*' (Yes, that's right)."

### Malacañang eyes amnesty for rebels

MANAMA, Bahrain (via PLDT)—President Macapagal-Arroyo is set grant a general amnesty to all rebels to show proof of her desire to achieve reconciliation among the country's fractious sectors.

"As far as reconciliation is concerned, I have submitted to Congress a general amnesty bill for groups and individuals involved in past conflicts with the government so that we can put our past national divisions behind us," Ms. Macapagal said in an interview with Gulf News.

ALL FOR ONE. Leaders of the Magdalo mutineers—Layug, Alejano, Gambala and Trillanes— are in a huddle with lawyer Homobono Adaza at the Makati RTC shortly before their arraignment was postponed.

ERIK ARAZAS

## Magdalo arraignments postponed: judge sick; military court challenged

By Margaux Ortiz and TJ Burgonio

BOTH ARRAIGNMENTS yesterday of two groups of Oakwood mutineers were postponed to January for different reasons.

In Makati, everyone was in a festive mood at city hall when the 31 leaders of the July 27 Oakwood mutiny arrived for their arraignment on coup d'etat charges.

The junior military officers, led by Lt.(sg) Antonio Trillanes IV and Capt. Gerardo Gambala, signed autographs and smiled as city hall employees shrieked and snapped their pictures.

Even Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay came down from his office to shake the hands of some of the accused.

"*Matagal ko na silang gustong batiin dahil sa pinaglalaban nila* (I'd long wanted to meet them because of what they are fighting for)," Binay said, after shaking Trillanes' hand.

The handcuffed officers were in their camouflage uniforms.

Minutes later, they learned that their arraignment had been postponed to Jan. 8 next year after Judge Romeo Barza of the Makati Regional Trial Court, Branch 61, had a sudden allergy attack, according to court staff.

Trillanes and his co-accused are facing charges over a failed coup attempt at the luxury Oakwood Premier apartment-hotels in Makati City.

They had led a rebel group of 321 officers and men calling itself Magdalo protesting corruption in the armed forces.

After their surrender, authorities dropped coup d'etat charges against 290 of the men, saying they had only been following orders from Trillanes and the other junior officers.

The 290, however, still faced arraignment at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday on lesser charges, such as disrespect to the President and abandonment of post.

Their arraignment was reset, however, after their lawyer moved for the removal of members of the military tribunal hearing their case for alleged lack of fairness, which resulted in the lack of a quorum.

Only 166 officers and 100 personnel, mostly clad in fatigues, were present.

But before they could enter a plea, their lawyer Roel Pulido rose to question the holding of the arraignment, citing the lack of a pre-trial investigation and amendments made to the original charges against the soldiers.

The seven-man general court-martial, presided over by Brig. Gen. Ferdinand Bocobo, however, ruled against Pulido, saying that a pre-trial investigation had been conducted and denying the lawyer's motion to see the records.

At this point, Pulido rose to question the fairness of the court-martial and issued "a peremptory challenge" against five members of the tribunal, leading to their removal.

This left Bocobo and Col. Manuel Llena on the tribunal, leading to the lack of a quorum. With this, Bocobo adjourned the hearing and reset it for Jan. 6.

The accused had a right to issue a "peremptory challenge" against any member of the tribunal without citing any grounds. This has no equivalent in civilian courts, according to their lawyers.

The five members who were removed will be replaced before the hearing next month.

"We are hoping that they are exercising this not to delay the court (hearing). If they will do this again at the next hearing, the tribunal will be left with no one, and the accused may not be able to have a speedy trial," Bocobo said.

Pulido said he would resort to the same challenge at the next hearing until the tribunal agrees to hold a pre-trial investigation of the officers and their men.

"If there is anyone who delayed this, it is the military. My clients have been detained for five months already," he told reporters, adding: "If there's no pre-trial investigation, why go to trial? Let's go back to pre-trial."

Back in Makati, the lawyer for the accused junior officers, Reynaldo Robles, revealed that there have been offers from past and present government officials to "broker the accused's release."

Robles said the standing offer included taking an oath of allegiance in Malacañang, "which they (officers) refuse to do."

"These are very principled young soldiers," Robles said. "*Ayaw nilang ibenta ang mga prinsipyo nila* (They do not want to barter their principles)."

Judge Barza had approved the "no bail" recommendation of government lawyers against Trillanes and the 30 other officers after finding probable cause against them earlier this month.

The other co-accused officers are Captains Milo Maestrecampo, Garry Alejano, Lawrence Louis Somera, Gerardo Gambala, Nicanor Faeldon, Albert Baloloy, Segundino Orfiano, John Andres and Alvin Ebreo, Lt.(sg) James Layug, Manuel Cabochan, Eugene Louie Gonzales and Andy Torrato and Lt.(jg) Arturo Pascua;

First Lieutenants Florentino Somera, Cleo Dongaas, Sonny Sarmiento, Audie Tocloy, Von Rio Tayab, Rex Bolo, Lawrence San Juan, Warren Lee Dagupon, Nathaniel Rabonza, Jonnel Sanggalang, Billy Pascua and Francisco Ashley Acedillo;

Second Lt. Kristoffer Bryan Yasay, Ensign Armand Pontejos, PO3 Cesar Gonzales and PO3 Julius Mesa.

Only Somera and Andres were absent from the arraignment.

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## Top gov't lawyer raises doubt on reinvestigation of Nur case

CHIEF State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuno yesterday said that he doubted whether the court trying former Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao Gov. Nur Misuari on rebellion charges would agree to hold a re-investiation of the case in Zambonga City.

"I don't know if the court would grant it since that would delay the trial. And transporting Nur Misuari to Zamboanga would be a big risk for the military. That's why I really doubt it if the judge would grant that," Zuno said.

Zuno made the comment after Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong ordered a reinvestigation of the charges against Misuari in Zamboanga upon the the request of Misuari's lawyers.

Datumanong agreed with their contention that the former rebel leader was deprived of "the full measure" of his right to due process."

In his three-page resolution, Datumanong ordered a preliminary investigation to be conducted in Zamboanga City "as soon as possible."

Zuno declined to comment on the confusion sowed by Datumanong's order.

"It's up to the Secretary to answer that question. I cannot question the order of the Secretary," he said.

*Philip C. Tubeza*

# Pimentel asks FPJ, Lacson to lay cards on the table

**By Michael Ubac**

OPPOSITION Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday asked movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson to reveal what the two presidential contenders discussed during their one-on-one meeting on Saturday to avoid speculations of any shady agreements.

"The people should be made aware of what was discussed so that there is no speculation as to any shady agreements," said Pimentel, the founding chair of PDP-Laban.

Pimentel noted that the meeting was shrouded in mystery with both camps having conflicting versions of what really transpired and agreed upon during their meeting.

Sen. Edgardo Angara, president of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), agreed with Pimentel's call, saying "I think, they should do that."

Angara welcomed the Poe-Lacson meeting because it allowed the two "to talk things out." But he quickly stressed: "I don't think that the (selection) process will be changed."

Angara was in Mexico while Pimentel was in Thailand when the secret meeting between Poe and Lacson occurred.

Angara's LDP and Pimentel's PDP-Laban, along with Horacio "Boy" Morales of Pwersa ng Masa, comprise the newly-formed Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

The three political parties earlier signed a covenant to field a single opposition ticket in the 2004 presidential polls.

Reacting to the Lacson camp's claim that the actor had agreed to draw up a new selection process for the opposition's standard-bearer, Pimentel said: "How? It's so easy to say that."

Pimentel urged the two contenders to clarify whether the meeting, and the alleged agreement to come up with a "fair and honest" selection process, were just part of an elaborate plan to allow Lacson to have a graceful exit.

Lacson has maintained that he would stand for election in 2004 against President Macapagal-Arroyo, but clarified that he would do so only if supported by a united opposition.

Monsieur Christmas

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MEN'S ACTIVE WEAR

# Infighting among Poe backers bared

**By Christian V. Esguerra and Jerry Esplanada**

WHO is William "Billy" Esposo and why is he saying those things?

"I don't know him personally," former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said yesterday. "I have no idea why he made that statement."

Enrile, chair of the seven-man panel who declared actor Fernando Poe Jr. as the so-called United Opposition's standard-bearer for May 2004, was reacting to Esposo's ruling out former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco's support.

"FPJ (Poe) is very close to his heart but it's unimaginable for (Cojuangco) to identify himself with the likes of Enrile," Esposo, former president of the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa), said earlier.

Worse, Esposo said, the proclamation on Dec. 6 was reminiscent of the Marcos regime, with Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos, Ernesto Maceda, and Enrile present.

In a phone interview, Enrile told the INQUIRER: "We respect the right of other people to make their choice. I hope they'll also respect (ours)."

Enrile clarified that his group, Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino, did not unilaterally pick FPJ. He said it was the decision of the coalition composed of Pwersa, Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and PDP Laban.

Poe was a no-show during the proclamation on Dec. 6. The INQUIRER was told that this was because he did not want to disappoint Cojuangco, a long-time friend.

According to a reliable source, Cojuangco had given conditions before he could pledge full backing. Among these was for the 63-year-old actor to avoid being identified with "traditional politicians" like Juan Ponce Enrile.

Cojuangco, younger brother of former President Corazon Aquino, previously said he was keen on helping Poe, whom he had known as an "honorable and intelligent man" throughout a friendship that began in 1959.

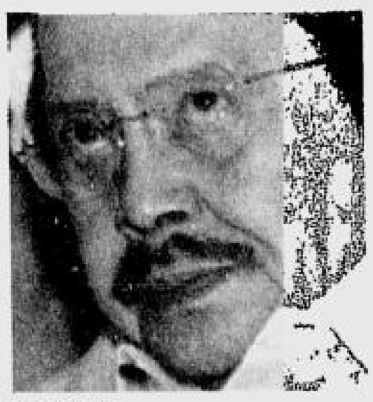
But asked in a phone interview about his alleged conditions, Cojuangco was evasive: "I'm not really looking at (the personalities)." In fact, he was still consulting with his provincemates about which candidate to endorse, he said. "It's too early. (I just) want to say is that he (Poe) is not what most people think he is."

Esposo theorized that the actor would accept the support of Enrile's group in the end, forcing Cojuangco out of the picture.

"Poe is basically protesting traditional politics but he really has no choice," Esposo said. "He's already anchored with the opposition."

## NEWSBRIEFS

### Erap wants to spend Christmas with ma



ESTRADA

LAWYERS of ousted President Estrada yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan's special division to allow him to spend Christmas and New Year at his ailing mother's home in San Juan. "With the onset of the season of grace and hope, there is that strong natural yearning to be with loved ones. President Estrada's solitary wish at this time is to spend Christmas and New Year at his mother's home in Greenhills, San Juan," Estrada's lawyers Jose B. Flaminiano and Noel Malaya said. The furlough covers the period from Dec. 24 to Jan. 2. *Armand N. Nocum*

### Paguia offered slot in Senate slate

AFTER being suspended from practicing law, maverick lawyer Allan Paguia has been offered a new career, possibly in the Senate. The camp of ousted President Estrada, head of the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino, has offered to include Paguia, the former leader's personal lawyer in the plunder and graft case, in PMP's senatorial ticket. But Paguia, an Ateneo law professor, declined the offer outright. "My wife is quite uncomfortable with the idea of me running for the Senate," Paguia said in a telephone interview. Apart from Paguia, Estrada said other possible PMP bets are former Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Miriam Defensor Santiago, Francisco Tatad, John Osmeña and Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, Jamby Madrigal; and Estrada's son Jinggoy Estrada. *Armand N. Nocum*

### GMA temporarily takes DFA post

PRESIDENT Macapagal

MANAMA, Bahrain (via PLDT)—President Macapagal-Arroyo will assume the post of Foreign Affairs Secretary in a concurrent capacity pending a replacement for the late Secretary Blas Ople. In an interview with Gulf News, Ms Macapagal said: "For a short while , I will be the Secretary of Foreign Affairs just as I was before I asked Ople to become DFA chief." The President was concurrent DFA Secretary when Vice President Teofisto Guingona vacated the post last year due to differences on the Iraq policy. *Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr.*

### Where is Mike Arroyo?

PALACE officials were clueless as to why First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo was conspicuously absent during the entire three-nation overseas trip of President Macapagal-Arroyo. The First Gentleman was not seen when the President went to Japan from Dec. 12 to 13 for a working visit and when she met Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko. He was also missing when the President made a brief stopover in Hong Kong on Dec. 14 and during her trip to Bahrain. All official documents pertaining to the trip indicated the First Gentleman's participation. Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the First Gentleman found the overseas trip "too short." *Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr.*

### Neri: Gordon hates me

GORDON

BAGUIO CITY—Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon has shifted his ire from archrival Feliciano Payumo, chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), to the government's chief economist, who approved the Subic port project that will be financed by Japan. "Gordon is very upset with me. He feels I have already sold out to Payumo," said Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri who approved the $215-million Subic port development project at Cubi Point. Gordon had objected to the port project, saying it would endanger marine life in the area. He also claimed that corruption attended SBMA's processing of the Subic port project. "Nothing personal, nothing political. I am just looking at the economic bottom line, and that project, although it is expensive ... was approved by Neda in the past," he said.

*Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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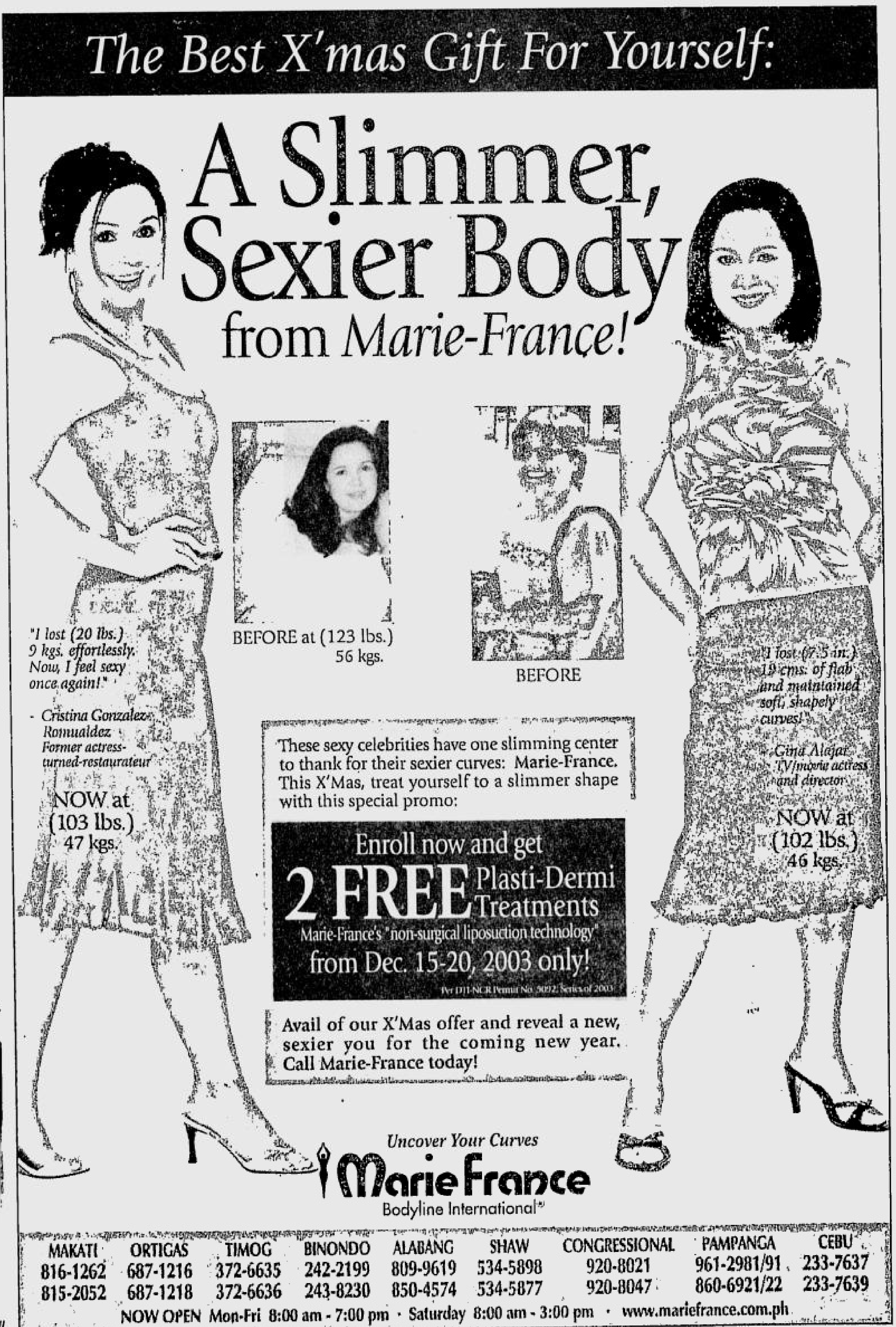

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## MESSAGES

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
**OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT**
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER
CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES COMPLEX
PASAY CITY

My warmest greetings and congratulations to the DXN International Private Ltd.

Founded in 1993 by Dr. Lim Siow Jin in Malaysia, DXN has successfully expanded globally and earned international recognition. It has been included in the prestigious Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange. The corporation was adjudged the Most Outstanding Multi-level Marketing Firm by the Consumers League of the Philippines. Most recently, it was included in the Securities and Exchange Commission's ranking of the Top 5000 Corporations in the Philippines.

The Daxen family, through multi-level marketing strategy and unique Ganoderma products, aims to promote better health, financial independence and personal achievements, hence a higher quality of life. It has been recognized for its strong commitment and ability to conform to the direct selling code of ethics, ensuring protection for the consumers.

I exhort DXN International Private Ltd. to continue its aim of manufacturing high quality, safe and effective products that are in accordance with valid international standards.

MABUHAY KAYONG LAHAT!

**TEOFISTO T. GUINGONA, JR.**

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

DXN

To the management, staff and distributors of DXN Philippines:

My warmest greetings and congratulations on the 4th anniversary of DXN International Private Ltd. -Philippines!

We at the DXN Global HQ send you our best wishes for the continued success of the Philippine branch and the more than 300,000 distributors who have contibuted immensely to the phenomenal expansion of DXN not only in your country but also across the seas.

Your exemplary dedication, sacrifice and commitment to the business are deeply appreciated by the entire DXN global family. Always be assured of our fullest support.

Mabuhay!

DR. LIM SIOW JIN
Executive Chairman & CEO
DXN Group of Companies

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

*City of Pasig*

My warmest felicitations and best wishes to the Management, Staff and Distributors of DXN International Private Ltd..

I reiterate our appreciation to DXN for choosing the city of Pasig as the center of its business operations in the Philippines. DXN provided our countrymen not only the means for attaining a healthy lifestyle but also an alternative source of livelihood that is highly profitable, yet practical and affordable even to the greater masses of our people.

As DXN continue to pursue its noble objectives in support of the government's efforts at improving the health and economic well-being of the Filipino people, allow me to congratulate you for your outstanding achievements in the multi-level marketing business.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay ang D>

SOLEDAD C. EUSEBIO
City Mayor

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF FOOD AND DRUGS

In behalf of the Bureau of Food and Drugs, I wish to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the officers and staff of DXN International Private Ltd. for their achievements which include, among others, public listing in the prestigious Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE) in Malaysia, the Most Outstanding Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) Firm adjudged by the Consumers League of the Philippines, and inclusion in the ranking of the Securities and Exchange Commission in the Top 5000 Corporations in the Philippines

May your accomplishments serve as a source of inspiration to all of us. Together, let us strive to continue improving the health and consequently the quality of life of the Filipino people.

*Mabuhay!*

PROF. LETICIA-BARBARA B. GUTIERREZ, MS
Director

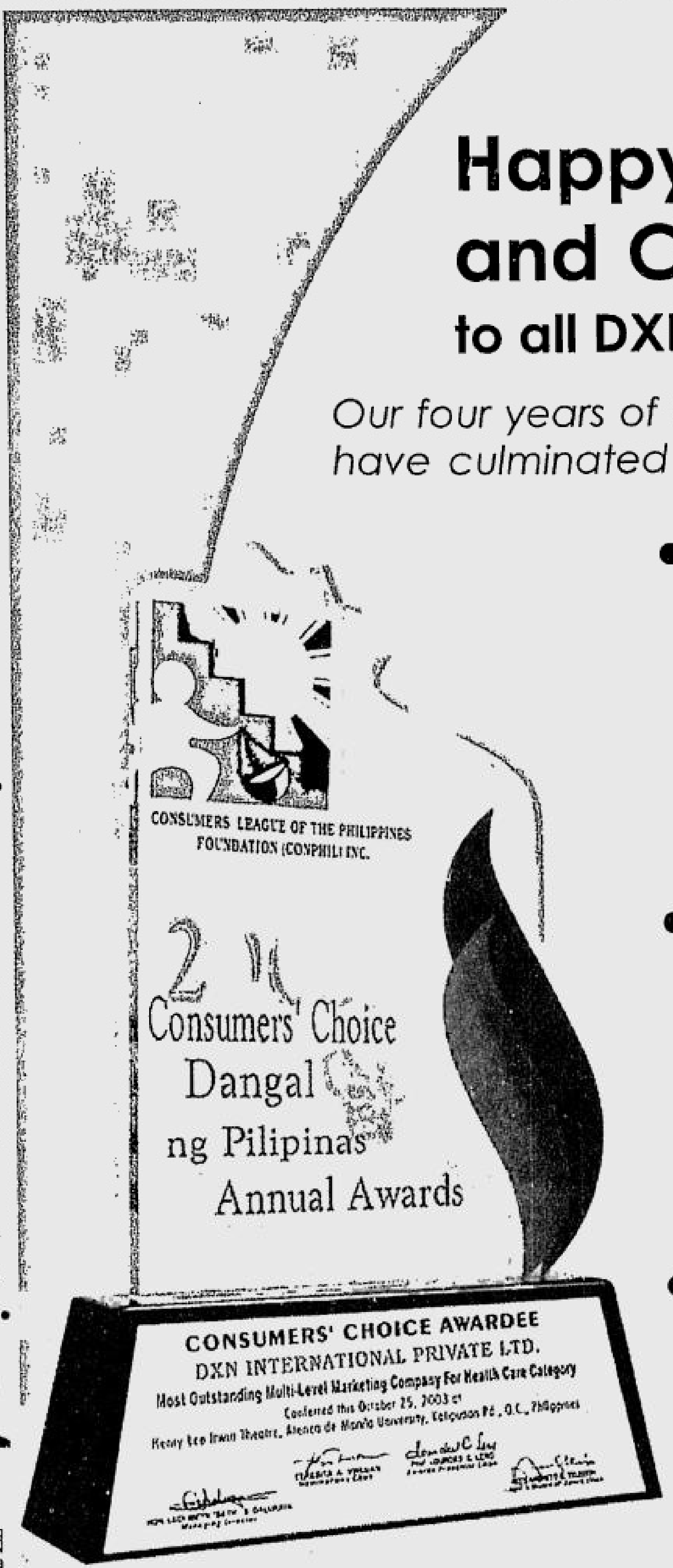
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

*International Exchange Bank*

I would like to convey my warmest congratulations to DXN International Private Ltd. (Phils.) for being adjudged as the most outstanding Multi Level Marketing company in health category by the Consumers League Foundation of the Philippines for the 2003.

To the people behind DXN International Private Ltd. (Phils.), I wish you all the best and more power.

NILO L. PACHECO, JR.
Executive Vice President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DXN INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE LTD.
Most Outstanding Multi-Level Marketing Company For Health Care Category
Conferred this October 25, 2003 at
Henry Lee Irwin Theatre, Ateneo de Manila University, Katipunan Rd., Q.C., Philippines

# Happy 4th Anniversary and Congratulations

## to all DXN member-distributors!

*Our four years of highly rewarding partnership have culminated in these achievements ...*

- **"Most Outstanding Multilevel Marketing Company for Health Care Category"** in the 2003 **Consumers' Choice Dangal ng Pilipinas Awards** given to **DXN International Private Ltd.** (Philippines) by the Consumers' League Foundation of the Philippines (Conphil), Inc.
- Recognition of **DXN International Private Ltd. (Philippines)** as **No. 551** among the country's Top 1000 corporations (Source: ***Philippines 5000*** published by the Securities and Exchange Commission)

  *Congratulations also to* ***DXN Holdings Bhd (Malaysia)!***
- First ganoderma-producing company to be enlisted in the main board of the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange and most active trader in its September 30, 2003 opening. Its initial success in the stock market reflected the high level of investors' confidence in the fast growing global business of DXN.

***Providing high-quality, low-priced health products and a truly viable business opportunity for the masses will be our enduring commitment.***

*ONE WORLD, ONE MARKET*

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DXN

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## Phenomenal at Four

The record tells it all. DXN International Private Ltd. (Philippines), distributor of mushroom-based health products from Malaysia, has done in its first four years what most new enterprises would have taken longer — even decades — to achieve.

Not only has it put high-quality but low-priced health products in the hands of thousands and thousands of Filipino families through direct seling as well as multi-level marketing (MLM). DXN has attracted some 400,000 Filipinos to join the business as distributor-partners and thus avail of the opportunity to enjoy higher income and a much improved lifestyle.

More remarkably, the young enterprise has made it to the country's top 1000 corporations within just three years of its business operation. In the latest edition of ***Philippines 5000***, a listing of the top 5000 corporations published by the Securities and Exchange Commission, DXN was ranked in fiscal year 2001 as No. 1147 in sales. But the company came out stronger in fiscal year 2002, catapulting itself to **No. 551** in the list.

Recently, DXN was cited by the Consumers League Foundation of the Philippines (Conphil), Inc. as ***"Most Outstanding Multi-level Marketing Company for Health Care Category"*** in the 2003 *Consumers' Choice Dangal ng Pilipinas Awards.* Conphil said it was based on "the company's reliability, product or service excellence, competence, marketability and price reasonability."

### A Challenging Start

The DXN business in the Philippines began in late 1999 under the most trying circumstances. The country then was in grave political turmoil and the economy was reeling from the devastating effects of the peso devaluation. Still the Malaysian-based,18-company DXN Group headed by its founder and CEO Dr. Lim Siow Jin, inspired by his vision of "One World, One Market", defied the odds and put up its Philippine branch,

With a lean administrative staff and only a handful of distributors, the group braved the harsh economic conditions to introduce its line of ganoderma-based health products such as ***Reishi Gano, Ganocellum, Lingzhi Coffee, Ganozhi Toothpaste, Ganozhi Shampoo, Ganozhi Body Foam***, etc. The products quickly won the hearts of health-conscious Filipinos.

What really got thousands interested in DXN was its dual offer of improved health through the wonders of ganoderma, the medicinally acclaimed red mushroom, and high income through the company's global network marketing system. Since then the company has enlisted some 400,000 distributors nationwide. From plain housewives to desperate breadwinners, from the jobless to professionals, a good number of them have actually built their own fortunes from DXN earnings. Their amazing success stories have inspired thousands more to join DXN .

Today DXN has become a byword in network marketing. Through its more than 200 service centers across the Philippines, it has made its health products and training services within the reach of distributors and consumers practically anywhere in the country. Though still a corporate youngster, the company has risen to the stature of an industry leader.

Its phenomenal growth would defy explanation. For to venture explaining it would redefine business success. How a newcomer, just turning four, could have made it among the country's top 1000 businesses would indeed make a fascinating story. But it could be summed up briefly: *Growth is best measured in achievements, not years.*

Advt.

# Palace says Malaysians can interrogate Robot

MALAYSIA will be allowed to quiz the captured top leader of the kidnap-for-ransom group Abu Sayyaf who remains under tight guard at a military hospital in Quezon City, a Malacañang official said yesterday.

Galib Andang, popularly known as Commander Robot, was shot and captured on Dec. 7 in Indanan, Sulu, by government forces.

He had kidnapped 21 tourists and workers in a cross-border raid from the Malaysian island resort of Sipadan in 2000.

Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Razak had said that a team was being prepared to interview Andang, adding that information obtained from him would be useful to check crime along a common sea border between the two countries.

While the Philippine military will have the first crack at drawing information from Andang, Manila is committed to regional cooperation against terrorism, deputy presidential spokesman Ricardo Saludo said.

"In that light, we would certainly give due consideration to requests from countries with whom we are cooperating to stamp out the threat of international terrorism," Saludo told reporters.

All the hostages taken by Andang in 2000 had been released in batches after payments of ransom amounting to as much as $25 million, former government chief negotiator Robert Aventajado said in a recently published book.

The Abu Sayyaf is a rag-tag band of self-proclaimed Islamic militants regarded by both Manila and the US government as a terrorist organization.

Security officials say the group once had loose links with Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network.

*AFP*

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# Local political rivalries threaten to undermine Lakas machinery

**By Carlito Pablo**

LONG-FESTERING political rivalries at the local level could throw a monkey wrench into the administration's machinery in 2004.

This much was acknowledged by Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. as the mad scramble for local positions, from congressman to municipal mayor, began yesterday with the filing of certificates of candidacies.

"That's the reality," De Venecia said. "Local politics have their own dynamics."

It is a common practice among local leaders who are not endorsed or supported by their own parties to junk national candidates.

De Venecia cited Manila as one example.

Mayor Lito Atienza is President Macapagal Arroyo's campaign manager for the city, but because Atienza's son-in-law, Miles Roces, is running for the third legislative district, the administration will lose the support of incumbent Rep. Harry Angping.

Angping, who belongs to the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) which is in alliance with the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, is expected to support actor Fernando Poe Jr.

Also in Manila, former Mayor Ismael Lopez, a rival of Atienza's, has been seen in a Poe gathering. Lopez is a brother of Rep. Jaime Lopez, a Lakas stalwart.

In Caloocan, Rep. Enrico Echiverri of Lakas is running for mayor, pitting himself against Gigi Malonzo, wife of the incumbent Reynaldo Malonzo, former action movie star and a key supporter of Ms Macapagal's. The Liberal Party, a Lakas ally, has endorsed Rep. Enrico Erice for the post.

Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo of Lakas will run for municipal mayor of Valenzuela against Rita Carlos, wife of the incumbent Jose Carlos, a Lakas leader.

Jeannie Sandoval, wife of Malabon-Navotas Rep. Federico Sandoval II of Lakas, is running for mayor of Malabon against a Lakas candidate.

In Pasay, the reelection bid of Lakas Rep. Connie Dy may be challenged by incumbent Vice Mayor Emy Calixto, said to be a protege of Presidential adviser Marita "Mai-Mai" Jimenez.

To mitigate the effects of these local rivalries, De Venecia is putting together what he hopes will be a formidable machinery to support Ms Macapagal.

This machinery will be based on the existing alliance at the House between Lakas and the NPC Coalition, with De Venecia securing the support of NPC congressmen and provincial governors.

Leaders of the two parties are reportedly set to sign today a covenant strengthening the alliance.

# Nani booed inside cockpit

**By Mei Magsino**
*PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

BATANGAS CITY—Former Justice Secretary Hernando "Nani" Perez, who plans to run for Batangas governor, seems to have run out of political luck.

After being ignored by Batangas city and town mayors, even cockfight aficionados in the province apparently don't want Perez to be their governor.

In his visit on Saturday afternoon to the Sta. Rita Sportsville Center in Barangay Sta. Rita in this city, Perez was reportedly heckled by *sabungeros* (cockfight aficionados). Perez has denied he was booed.

But a sabungero interviewed by the INQUIRER said that Perez arrived in the middle of a cockfight with his bodyguards and friends. There were about 200 *sabungeros* in the cockpit arena.

"Then the *kristo* announced over the speaker that 'we have a special guest, a candidate,' and shouted Nani's name. All of a sudden people were shouting 'boo!'" the source said.

Instead of the usual shouts of "lo dies," only loud booes could be heard from the cockpit, he claimed. The heckles were even heard on the highway which was about 20 meters away, he added.

Another *sabungero* said Nani's presence in the cockpit arena was not welcome.

"Why would someone like him go there? Is that for the sake of appearance or to campaign? I didn't see him bring a fighting cock. Maybe he was there to campaign. But that's the wrong place to do it," the INQUIRER source said.

When the people booed him, Perez and his companions left the cockpit, the source said.

In a phone interview, Perez admitted being in the cockpit, but denied being heckled at. "That was just 'kwentong kutsero.' I wasn't booed at. The people there applauded for me," Perez said.

Last week, Perez announced his plans to run for Batangas governor. But of the 34 town and city mayors in the province, only three attended his press conference.

Perez is still being investigated by the Swiss government for allegedly laundering $2 million in secret bank accounts in Switzerland. But, Perez said no evidence has been found linking him to the account.

## THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, December 16, 2003
3rd Week of Advent

1st Reading: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13
Gospel: Mt 21:28-32

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people, "What do you think of this? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said to him: 'Son, today go and work in my vineyard.' And the son answered: 'I don't want to.' But later he thought better of it and went. Then the father went to the second and gave him the same command. This son replied: 'I will go, sir,' but he did not go.

"Which of the two did what the father wanted?" They answered, "The first." And Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you: the publicans and the prostitutes are ahead of you on the way to the kingdom of heaven. For John came to show you the way of goodness but you did not believe him, yet the publicans and the prostitutes did. You were witnesses of this, but you neither repented nor believed him."

### Commentary

*When a lifeguard appears on the beach, it is the drowning, not the safe, who appreciate his presence. A firefighter is appreciated by those in a burning building, not those who are far from danger. Similarly, in today's reading, it is the sinners—the tax collectors and prostitutes—who enter God's Kingdom before the Pharisees. They followed John the Baptist (and then Jesus) before the others because of their acute sense of need. They knew they needed saving. God preserve us then from pharisaical self-sufficiency! God be thanked for all experiences that remind us of our fragility, our dependence, our incompleteness. They create in us the conditions for our salvation.*

*Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City. UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)*

## SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Unlawful aggression presupposes actual, sudden, unexpected or imminent danger—not merely threatening and intimidating action. Uncertain, premature and speculative was the assertion of appellant that the victim was about to stab him, when the latter had merely drawn out his knife. There is aggression, only when the one attacked faces real and immediate threat to one's life. The peril sought to be avoided must be imminent and actual, not just speculative. Even assuming *arguendo* that there was an altercation before the stabbing incident and that some danger did in fact exist, the imminence of that danger had already ceased the moment appellant disarmed the victim by wrestling the knife from the latter. After the former had successfully seized it, there was no longer any unlawful aggression to speak of that would have necessitated the need to kill the latter. Hence, appellant became the unlawful aggressor when he stabbed the victim. When an unlawful aggression that has begun no longer exists, the one who resorts to self-defense has no right to kill or even to wound the former aggressor. To be sure, when the present victim no longer persisted in his purpose or action to the extent that the object of his attack was no longer in peril, there was no more unlawful aggression that would warrant legal self-defense on the part of appellant. Undoubtedly, the latter went beyond the call of self-preservation when he proceeded to inflict excessive, atrocious and fatal injuries on the latter, even when the allegedly unlawful aggression had already ceased. [ Citations omitted. ] [En Banc, Justice Panganiban, People vs Escarlos, G. R. No. 148912, September 10, 2003] BY R. B. VERA

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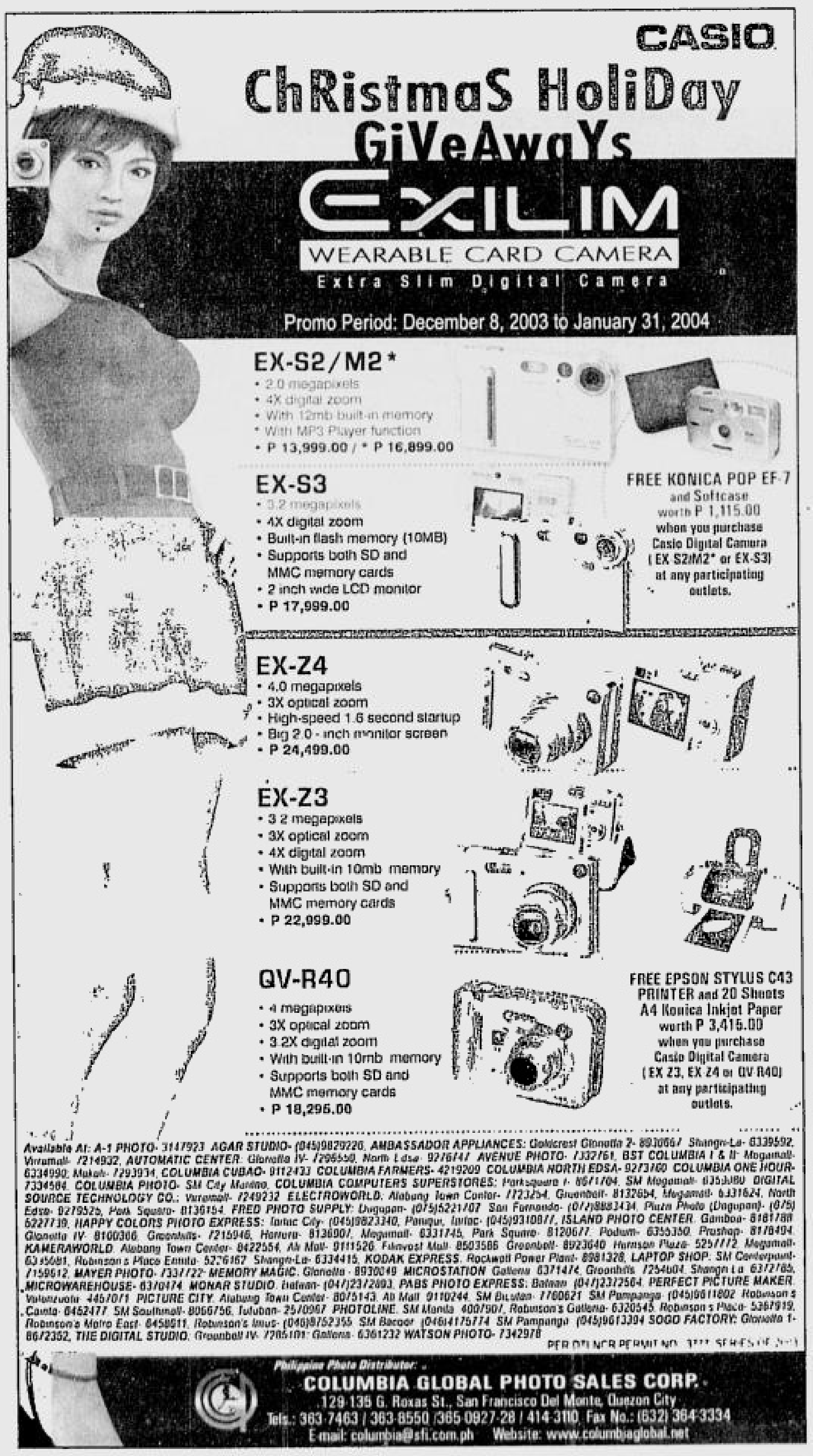

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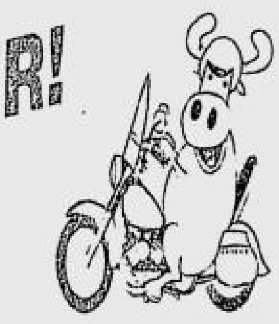

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# US woman setting up K-9 squads for rescue

INSPIRED by the role played by dogs in arduous search and rescue operations during the September 2001 US terror attacks, an American woman is laying the groundwork' for an Asia-Pacific canine network that can swing into action during disasters.

Volunteer Renee Speltz, wife of a Manila-based banker from Texas, is leading efforts to set up 30 dog rescue units for immediate deployment in the Philippines and then expand them to cover the disaster-prone region.

"I was surprised when I first heard that there is no fully trained canine search and rescue squads in this region although it's ravaged by deadly typhoons, floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters every year," Speltz told AFP.

The nurse and counselor recalled how valuable the 260-odd dog teams were in search operations after hijacked passenger jets were used by terrorists to crash into the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center, the Pentagon in Washington, and a field in Pennsylvania, killing more than 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001.

The dogs had worked round the clock in 12-hour shifts and, aside from tracking down survivors, recovered thousands of body parts which were used in DNA identification.

The United States receives many requests from Asian countries for canine squads to help in relief work during earthquakes, floods, landslides, terrorist bombings or in other such disasters but it takes a long time to ferry them to the region.

"You only have a 100-hour window to find a victim in a rubble and it takes between 48 and 72 hours for a canine squad to be planed into the region from the United States.

"If you do the math, you'll find it's just unacceptable. So I pursued my little dream to have these canine squads right here so more lives can be saved," said the 50-year-old wife of Paul Speltz, the US executive director at the Asian Development Bank.

She helped set up the Philippine Canine Search and Rescue Association, Inc. (PhK9SAR), a non-profit vehicle that will train and form the 30 dog units largely for disaster relief operations on a free-of-charge basis.

"If there is an earthquake for example and people are trapped, we will offer our services. What we need is the logistics to get to the spot which can be provided by the authorities or the private sector," Speltz said.

The first batch of 10 units, expected to complete training in September next year, would be certified by the US-based National Association for Search and Rescue, which has experts to conduct courses and conferences and for standards and certifications. *AFP*

# Stay cool, Fujian flu not new to Filipinos–DOH

**By Martin P. Marfil**

DON'T panic.

The Fujian flu, which is sowing mild terror abroad, is not new to Filipinos, according to the Department of Health.

Records of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine revealed 25 cases of the new flu strain from January to October this year, but no deaths were reported.

"This virus, identified as Influenza A H3N2 Fujian strain, has been in circulation for a year now, and we have been seeing Filipinos getting the flu and recovering from it," Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said in a statement.

Dayrit said the main defense against the flu are still "practical measures," like covering one's mouth or nose when coughing or sneezing, and avoiding people exhibiting these symptoms especially in crowded places.

The health department recommends that people experiencing symptoms stay home, rest, drink plenty of liquids and not to take antibiotics hastily.

High-risk groups such as the elderly, pregnant women, very young children and people with health conditions like asthma, diabetes and heart disease, should take extra care.

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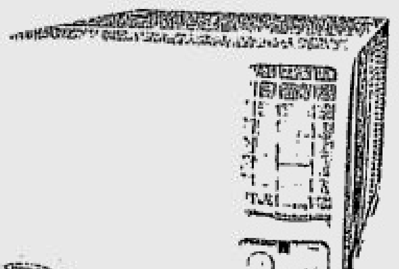

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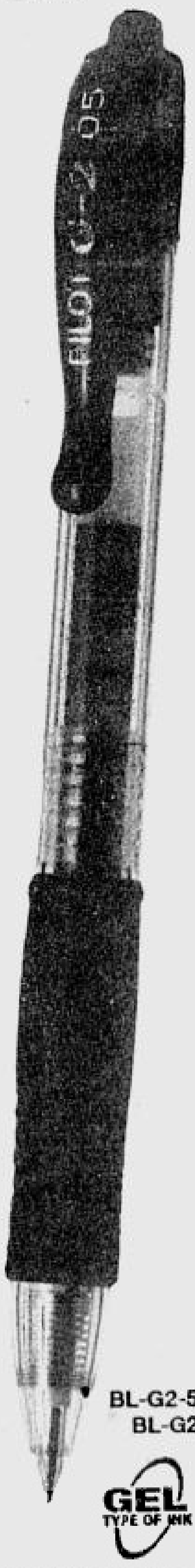

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# Gloria: Meeting OFWs part of job

From page A1

welcome by Bahrain's king, Sheik Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. Her visit aims to boost bilateral, economic and political ties with the tiny Gulf kingdom.

During one-on-one talks at the Al Rawdha Palace, the king expressed support for Ms Macapagal's initiative to start exploratory peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), according to the President's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

Ms Macapagal is the second Philippine president to visit Bahrain. Former President Fidel Ramos visited the island-nation in November 1997.

The President heads a 70-member delegation, including members of Congress, Cabinet secretaries and a private and public trade delegation.

She was to meet with the 25,000-strong Filipino community in Bahrain, which depends heavily on foreign labor. Their remittances provide a key source of income for their families in the Philippines.

Many of the 900,000 Filipinos in neighboring Saudi Arabia, which has the largest Filipino community in the region, are also expected to pour into Manama to meet Ms Macapagal, Philippine Ambassador Eduardo Pablo Maglaya told The Associated Press.

## Holiday cheer

"I have brought them the Christmas spirit because many of them cannot be with their loved ones this season, but they are one with our nation and people in the celebration of a bright future," Ms Macapagal said in explaining her meeting with OFWs.

Despite criticism that she has been taking advantage of her office to further her candidacy, Ms Macapagal said she would "continue to champion the cause of our OFWs and their families for the pride and sacrifice they have shown for our country."

Ms Macapagal met with Sheik Hamad and the two leaders discussed the Philippine government's peace negotiations with the MILF and ways of boosting relations, according to the official Bahrain News Agency. The meeting was attended by Bahrain's prime minister, Sheik Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

"In the short term, Bahrain will be active in monitoring compliance with the ceasefire prior to the talks. In the long term, Bahrain will bolster the Philippines' relations with other OIC (Organization of the Islamic Countries)." Bunye said.

He quoted the king as saying that he would persuade other OIC countries to support the Philippines' bid to gain observer status in their ministerial talks.

By getting observer status, a third party from the OIC could act as a go-between and help build confidence between the government and the MILF rebels, Bunye said. In next month's exploratory talks with the MILF, Malaysia has agreed to take a direct hand, including providing a neutral ground for discussions.

## 3 agreements

Aside from the peace process, the Philippines and Bahrain signed three agreements to broaden bilateral ties in tourism development, air travel and human resources development.

They agreed to help each other promote and develop tourism traffic through an exchange of technical expertise, increased investments, and cultural exchange. In the protocol amending the air services agreement, they will designate one or more airlines to operate the agreed services on the specified routes.

In the memorandum of understanding on technical education, the two countries agreed to cooperate in undertaking human resource development, skills training, people exchange and technology transfer.

The signing of the agreements was delayed for one day because of the sudden death of Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, who fell critically ill on his way from Tokyo to Bahrain.

On Monday, Ms Macapagal officially opened the new location of the Philippine School of Bahrain, a 9-year old education center with roughly 500 students aged 4 to 17. *Reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Gil C. Cabacungan and INQUIRER wires*

# GMA wants hero's burial for Ka Blas

From page A1

served for 10 years, his former colleagues called him a national treasure, while the chamber issued a resolution lauding the "outstanding public servant" who passed away "while in the service of the nation."

Ople's funeral will be held on Sunday with several regional dignitaries in attendance, including foreign ministers from Thailand and Indonesia, the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

The DFA said it had received numerous condolence messages from all over the world.

Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai said Asean had lost a "good thinker and good writer."

"His death not only means you have lost a respected politician, but that we have lost an old friend," Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said in a message.

## Early adjournment

As protocol dictated, the Senate yesterday adjourned early; the session lasted only 31 minutes.

The chamber should have adjourned immediately, but senators took time to unanimously approve Resolution No. 730 extending "profound sympathy and sincere condolence" to the family of Ople.

The joint resolution was introduced by Senate President Franklin Drilon, Majority Leader Loren Legarda and Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III.

Legarda said Senate necrological rites for Ople are set for tomorrow morning.

Drilon, Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Edgardo Angara, former Sen. Francisco Tatad, and a member of the Ople family will deliver eulogies.

In the resolution, Ople was hailed as a "crusading labor leader, nationalist, prominent journalist, outstanding public servant, the Senate's resident intellectual, and a gentleman in the highest order."

"He earned the love and respect not only of his colleagues and employees in the Senate but also personalities in the international community for which he was consistently chosen one of the outstanding senators for the quality of his legislative work and his active participation in the chamber's debates and deliberations," it said.

The chamber said his passing on Sunday was an "immeasurable loss not only to his bereaved family and nation, but to the international community as well."

## Black at DFA

A mournful atmosphere marked the DFA offices in Pasay City, with the flag flown at half-staff and many employees clad in black. The building was struck by an unexplained power failure the whole day.

"We really felt his absence, especially since this place is like a home to us. It's as if our father has died," said Julia Heidemann, the public information services unit chief.

ROGER MARGALLO

**THE CASKET** bearing the remains of Foreign Secretary Blas Ople arrives at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Sunday night.

Heidemann, who became Pisu chief only in July, said Ople's death caught her by surprise. She said she and Ople had a chat lately and he had told her of looking for a property to buy in Italy where he could spend his retirement and write his memoirs.

The Pisu chief allowed reporters to go to Ople's office on the 11th floor.

The office was as Ople had left it. On the table was a diplomatic note from a Singaporean Embassy official dated Dec. 6. On one side was a stack of books which included Sun Tzu's "Art of War," "Unforgettable Days" by Vietnam's Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, and "Among the Believers" by V.S. Naipaul, as well as books on Cuba, the Middle East and 21st-century international relations.

Ople's office contained a bust of Apolinario Mabini, the premier and foreign secretary during the First Republic, an enlarged photograph of the inauguration of the Malolos Republic, and paintings of the Hagonoy Church, Gen. Gregorio del Pilar and the Imre Nagy Monument in Budapest, Hungary.

There was also an abstract work by Malang.

Senate President Pro Tempore Juan Flavier said the chamber had lost "a very accomplished scholar, a very dedicated nationalist and a national treasure of the country."

"My only regret is that I was not strong enough to emphasize to him the value of stopping his smoking," said Flavier, a medical doctor.

Drilon said: "We lost a national treasure. He was a statesman, a giant here in the Senate, and we mourn the loss of a friend. He was never stingy in his advice to his colleagues in the Senate."

Legarda said she was saddened by Ople's death because the latter "leaves an indelible mark in our national life. He was a great statesman, a great friend who was like a father to me, a selfless man who never withheld any information or any knowledge he could share, especially with a neophyte like me."

Sen. Gregorio Honasan, who worked with Ople during the 10th and 11th Congress, said the gap left by Ople's death "will leave a void, especially in our foreign relations," adding that "we have only a few who can understand national interest."

Angara described Ople as "intellectual yet pragmatic, far-seeing and yet aware of immediate concerns. He was extremely aware of world affairs but remained at home with domestic issues."

Angara said he cherished Ople's friendship. "He was a living national treasure, and in death, he should be honored as a national artist for the future."

In a separate resolution, Sen. Manuel Villar, who assumed the chairmanship of the foreign affairs committee after Ople left the Senate, said Ople steered the approval of 110 international and bilateral treaties that had "opened more links between the country and the rest of the world."

Villar called Ople "an exemplary statesman and nationalist," for displaying "outstanding performance as a legislator ... worthy of honor and recognition."

## Schedule of rites

The DFA information office issued a schedule of activities which announced the wake and interment of Ople at the St. Anne's National Shrine in Hagonoy. As of presstime, Ople's family was still considering the President's offer to have Ople interred at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio.

According to the schedule, Ople's remains would be brought to the Senate at 9 a.m. tomorrow. The body will then be brought to the DFA's Bulwagang Mabini where necrological services will be held by journalists, the labor department and labor groups.

The secretary's remains will be then transported to his residence in Sta. Monica, Hagonoy, Bulacan after the services. His body would lie in his residence from Friday to Sunday.

Tributes to Ople and messages of condolence to his family continued to pour in from all over the world at the DFA headquarters and at his wake at the Christ the King Church in Green Meadows, Quezon City.

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Taiwan's de facto embassy in the Philippines, also offered condolence and sympathy to the secretary's family.

In a press statement, Teco called Ople "a genuine statesman and devoted believer of freedom and democracy."

"We treasured very much the friendship he had generously extended to Taiwan, in spite of the absence of diplomatic ties. We trust that, based on shared democratic values and mutual respect, the substantive relations between the Philippines and Taiwan will grow stronger in the years to come," it added.

Philippine Ambassador to the United States Albert del Rosario called Ople "one of the greatest Filipinos who had essayed a vital role in Philippine contemporary history."

He recalled how Ople, as senator and chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations, helped reinvigorate Philippine-American relations following a hiatus with the withdrawal of US forces from the Philippines in 1991.

One of his last projects would have been a surprise visit to the 96-member Filipino delegation in Iraq this Christmas.

"He wanted to give them something to cheer them up this Christmas," Heidemann said. *With reports from Jerome Aning, Christine O. Avendaño and AFP*

# Business lobbyists killing ...

From page A1

control the outcome of next year's polls. He described "booty capitalism" as the well-entrenched oligarchy, which invests in the success of politicians to win favors and policy advantages, "and capture economic power."

"This is why FPJ (actor and presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr.) is popular. The masses want a hero to rescue them from the system," he said.

Although he declined to identify the business lobby groups that blocked Camacho's reforms, Neri named tycoon Lucio Tan as one of the businessmen opposed to government-sponsored reforms in the so-called "sin taxes."

Camacho had wanted to impose these taxes to restructure the traditional sources of government revenues, Neri said.

Both Tan and businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. have been linked to several political administrations due to their campaign support. Tan owns stakes in airlines, banks, hotels, a tobacco firm and a brewery, while Cojuangco was a one-time presidential aspirant and chair of the Nationalist People's Coalition.

## Campaign funds

Government reformists are relying on a measure that was jointly filed by Speaker Jose de Venecia and Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

The bill seeks to control campaign contributions by subsidizing all major political parties, Neri said. Although President Macapagal-Arroyo had not certified the bill as urgent, government reformists hoped that it would be approved before Congress ends its session, he said.

Neri said the 2004 elections should be participated in by political parties that were no longer beholden to "Big Business."

He said the proposed measure sought to shoulder P2 billion to P3 billion of the parties' operational expenditures to displace the seasonal campaign contributions from big businessmen.

Neri said Camacho's unattained reform measures were designed to reduce the government's borrowings, which were its only recourse to pay its mounting debt obligations.

He said Congress had failed to pass the reforms, and was now reaping its consequence, with a proposed 2004 national budget that would pay the government's debts rather than spend for its social programs.

Already, the budget could allocate more than 30 percent of the national budget to interest payments of some $7 trillion foreign and domestic debts, Neri said.

## Diversion

He said 15 percent of the budget is being diverted from education, social services and infrastructure.

"Without Congress' cooperation to pass new tax measures, it would be difficult to resolve the fiscal problem. It's politics that is really bringing us down... If we could have more responsible politicians who will think of the national interest instead of their own self-interest, the economy would have been better," Neri said.

"But the two most powerful vested interests are affected (by Camacho's tax reform proposals), and the House committee on ways and means has shown it could not go against these interests," he said.

"It is these people who are known to be financing elections and are their sources of campaign funds. If you are a politician, you would not want to antagonize a potential source of election financing."

Neri said he would not follow Camacho's lead by resigning from the Cabinet. He said he would remain in his post until the May 2004 elections because the "economy has shown sufficient rigor."

He said the GDP showed a 4.4-percent growth in October, while the gross national product (GNP) registered a high 5.9-percent growth.

Agriculture recovered with a third quarter growth of 5.6 percent, which accounted for the leap in growth, he said. He said industries grew by 2.3 percent, while the services sector accelerated to 5.6 percent in October.

The manufacturing sector registered a 4.4-percent growth, while investments grew to a high of 19.8 percent, "despite the problem of the Iraq conflict, the El Niño, the Oakwood mutiny and the Davide impeachment issue," Neri said.

But without "unproductive and destructive politics," the economy would have hit a GDP growth of 6-7 percent this year, he said.

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# The WORLD

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## Saddam's capture gives Bush needed poll boost

By Patricia Wilson

**WASHINGTON—Saddam Hussein's capture injected a dramatic new twist into the 2004 White House race on Sunday, bringing US President George W. Bush more good news and complicating the message of his Democratic rivals.**

With the US economy on the upswing and now the former Iraqi dictator in jail, the nine Democrats vying for the right to challenge Bush next year are once again having to refine their arguments for replacing him.

The most immediate effects, analysts said, would be a spike in the polls for Bush, vindication for the four candidates who voted to allow Bush to go to war in Iraq and short-term trouble for the front-running Howard Dean whose campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination is built around his fervent opposition to the US-led invasion.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, who along with Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri and Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, voted for the war resolution passed by the US Congress, pounced on Saddam's capture to attack Dean.

"This news makes clear the choice the Democrats face next year," Lieberman said. "If Howard Dean had his way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power today, not in prison, and the world would be a much more dangerous place."

BUSH

The Democratic presidential hopefuls have used the chaotic situation in Iraq, where 197 US soldiers have died in guerrilla attacks since Bush declared major combat operations over on May 1, to slam the president for failing to gain enough international cooperation for the war and not planning adequately for its messy aftermath.

"The fact of the matter is, as (Defense) Secretary (Donald) Rumsfeld said, we still have a long, hard slog to finish the job in Iraq," said Brad Woodhouse, spokesperson for the Democratic senatorial campaign committee. "The capture of Saddam Hussein is not the silver bullet that fixes everything."

Bush, whose approval ratings have been hard hit by the escalating violence, should get a quick boost, said Jennifer Duffy, an analyst for the Cook Report, a nonpartisan political newsletter.

"More important is whether it sticks," she said. "Or is this going to be a temporary blip?" The general election is 11 months away.

But the battle among the Democrats for their party's nomination begins in earnest with the Iowa caucuses on Jan. 19 and Saddam's arrest could be used to slow Dean's momentum. The former governor of Vermont was scheduled to give a major foreign policy address in Los Angeles on Monday. *Reuters*

## *'Nice Christmas': US cheers Saddam's fall*

CHICAGO—Football fans in New Jersey let out cheers. Kurds celebrated at a parking lot in Dallas. Wives of soldiers serving overseas prayed their long separations might soon draw to an end.

Across the United States, news of the capture of Saddam Hussein was greeted with whoops, hollers and smiles.

"Merry Christmas. This is a nice Christmas—we got him," said Naomi Jipping, a teacher in Columbus, Ohio, who digested the information over coffee at a 24-hour diner. "A lot of people aren't going to be in fear anymore."

People gathered around televisions in homes and stores, shaking their heads and smiling as they watched footage of the scruffy, bearded man some thought would never be caught.

Kristin Williams, who lives in New Albany, Ohio, said she found it fitting that a man she considers a coward was found hiding in a hole.

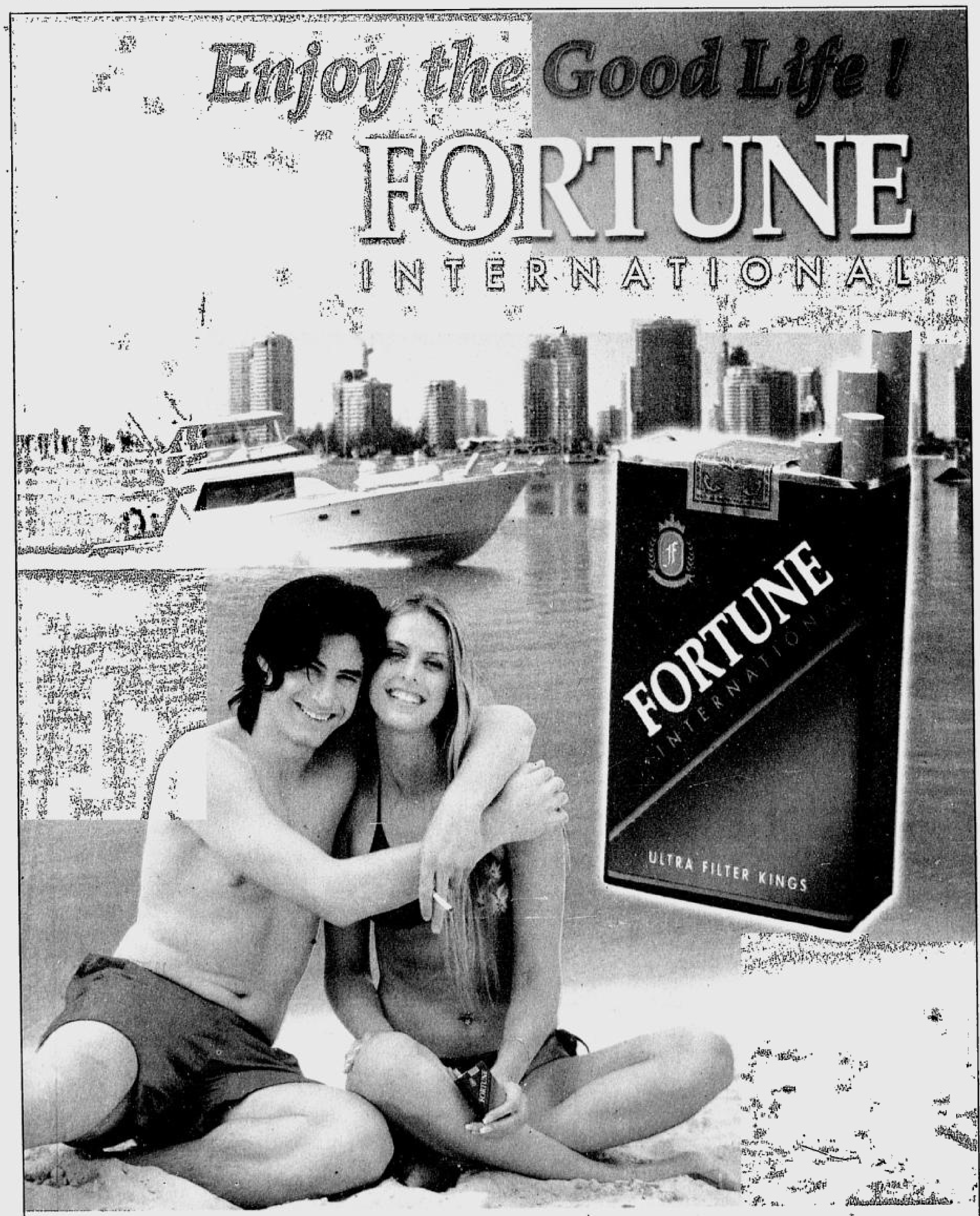
"Still, it's sad to see someone in that state of affairs. He looked like a caged animal," said Williams, 36. "Going to church, he was one of the people I prayed for, too."

The news was particularly sweet for Iraqi Americans.

"You know what they should do? Put a statue of Bush," said Habib Iradily, a 37-year-old truck driver from Detroit who fled Iraq to Saudi Arabia in 1991.

A cheer went up at the New York Jets-Pittsburgh Steelers football game after part of President Bush's announcement was broadcast over the stadium loudspeakers. In Dearborn, Michigan, a heavily Arab suburb of Detroit, people danced in the snowy streets, banging drums and waving Iraqi and American flags.

Kurds celebrated at a store parking lot in Dallas, joyous over the capture but with no pity for the man they blame for hundreds of thousands of Kurdish deaths. Children stomped a flaming picture of the former dictator. *AP*



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## China to US: Be more flexible on North Korea

BEIJING—China, indicating growing frustration with Washington at the lack of progress in resolving North Korea's nuclear crisis, has urged the United States to be more flexible in the next round of talks.

North Korea threatened on Monday to add to its nuclear arsenal if six-nation talks on the crisis were delayed, saying Washington was "wasting time" by rejecting Pyongyang's offer to freeze its nuclear arms program.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing delivered Beijing's message to US Secretary of State Colin Powell from Ethiopia where he is travelling with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, the official Xinhua news agency said on Monday.

"Li briefed Powell on China's stand and expressed hope for the US side to take a more flexible and practical attitude in preparation for the next round of six-party talks," Xinhua said in a report from Addis Ababa.

Analysts said the appeal was a sign of Beijing's frustration over a lack of headway in resolving the crisis after it first hosted three-way talks, then six-way talks in August and is now trying to set up the next round.

China's pressure on Washington comes only days after getting strong backing from US President George W. Bush on Taiwan. Bush, trying to ease tensions between China and Taiwan, bluntly warned the island against upsetting the status quo with its plans for a referendum about Chinese missiles pointed at the island.

Bush prompted the latest warning from Pyonyang when he rejected North Korea's demand for energy aid and other items in exchange for a freeze on its suspected nuclear arms program.

Bush told Wen during the premier's visit to Washington last week that the US goal was not a freeze but a full, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of the program.

It was not the first time China has criticized the United States over North Korea, but analysts said Li's remarks reflected growing frustration with Washington over the crisis, which has festered for more than a year. *Reuters*

## HK ex-finance chief in 'Lexus' mess home free

HONG KONG—Prosecutors said Monday that former Financial Secretary Antony Leung acted improperly in a car-purchase scandal that cost him his job, but they won't file charges because they doubt they could get a conviction.

Leung was investigated for allegedly having abused his office when he saved thousands of dollars by purchasing a Lexus just before he raised auto registration taxes, but the director of public prosecutions, Grenville Cross, said no case will be brought.

It was not clear that Leung had sought to evade taxes or that he had illegally covered up the matter afterward, Cross said.

"If the evidence was there, I would have prosecuted him," Cross told a news conference.

Critics immediately charged that Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa's government had shown favoritism—an allegation that emerged previously when Hong Kong opted against indicting a well-connected publisher in a circulation fraud case, even though she was identified as a co-conspirator.

"It gives the impression that the decision was biased and made to protect Tung's ally," said Albert Chan, a pro-democracy lawmaker and persistent government critic. "It deals a big blow to Hong Kong's rule of law." *AP*

# Pakistan president escapes assassination try

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan—Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf narrowly escaped an assassination attempt on Sunday when a bomb exploded just seconds after his motorcade had passed by.

"It was certainly a terrorist act and, certainly, it was me who was targeted," the military leader told reporters shortly after the attack.

Musharraf said the blast hit a bridge "just half a minute or one minute" after his motorcade passed it.

He had just returned from the southern city of Karachi, and the explosion occurred two km from Islamabad International Airport near the neighboring northern city of Rawalpindi, where the military has its headquarters.

MUSHARRAF

Musharraf incensed Pakistani Islamic militant groups by ditching support for the Afghan Taliban and siding with the US-declared war on terrorism after the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States in 2001.

Militants have been convicted for a previous attempt on the president's life.

"I have been saying that the greatest danger to our nation is not external, it is internal," he said.

"It comes from religious and sectarian extremists, and this is a typical example of that," he said, adding, "we have to fight all these people with all our might."

Police cordoned off the area, and were searching the site along with soldiers. A Reuters photographer said he could see a large crater in the road.

The blast came on the same day that Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri arrived in Pakistan on a three-day visit during which she is expected to sign an anti-terrorism pact.

Musharraf is a key ally in the US-led war on terror and enjoys sweeping political powers in Pakistan.

He has led a nationwide hunt for al-Qaida suspects that has netted hundreds of guerrillas, many of whom have been handed over to US custody.

They include Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, suspected mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks caught in Rawalpindi earlier this year.

The hunt goes on for al-Qaida mastermind Osama bin Laden, believed by some to be along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

Western diplomats, political commentators and businessmen agree that Pakistan would be left in a vulnerable position were Musharraf to be removed from power.

"The main worry I have about Pakistan is that there is no one who can take his place," a leading businessman in Karachi said earlier this week. *Reuters*

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## WORLDBRIEFS

### EU constitution fiasco

BRUSSELS—The European Union Sunday faced months of debilitating uncertainty after weekend summit talks designed to thrash out a new constitution collapsed in spectacular fashion. After two years of drafting the historic charter, which is supposed to equip the bloc for its biggest enlargement yet, EU leaders Saturday threw in the towel in the face of an intractable dispute over national voting rights. Attempts by the EU's Italian presidency to broker a deal foundered on fierce demands by Poland and Spain to retain the generous influence they secured in the Nice Treaty three years ago. France and Germany, on the other side of the divide, also refused to budge on their demands for a constitution that will allow an enlarged 25-nation EU of 450 million people to work effectively. The fiasco revived talk of a "two-speed" Europe developing, with French President Jacques Chirac renewing his demand for "pioneer groups" of EU members willing to cooperate more closely among themselves. *AFP*

### US convoys attacked

KUWAIT—Unidentified assailants fired twice on US military convoys outside of Kuwait City on Sunday, and four soldiers were hurt by flying glass, a US military spokesman said. "There were two attacks by small arms fire," a spokesperson for the US army in Kuwait said by telephone, adding the soldiers were wounded in one of the attacks. These were the latest in a string of attacks on US forces and American targets in the Gulf Arab state which was used as the launch pad for the US-led invasion of Iraq in March. *Reuters*

### Segregationist's love child

LOS ANGELES—A 78-year-old mixed-race woman has claimed she is the love child of late US senator Strom Thurmond, who once ran for president on a ticket of strict racial segregation. Retired schoolteacher Essie Mae Washington-Williams revealed her lifelong secret through her lawyer Sunday, saying she wanted to "bring final closure to the story that has captivated the South for much of the last century." She said her mother was a teenage black housemaid working for the Thurmond family in the southern US state of South Carolina in the 1920s. The stunning and ironic revelation came six months after the veteran South Carolina senator died in June at the age of 100, after serving 48 years in office and becoming the longest-sitting US senator in history. The southern politician was best known for his fiery opposition to racial integration and ran for the US presidency in 1948 under the banner of the "Dixiecrats," a group of anti-civil rights southern Democrats. *AFP*

### Clark in Milosevic trial

THE HAGUE—US presidential candidate and former Nato commander Wesley Clark will take the stand Monday in the war crimes trial of former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic in a closed session insisted upon by Washington. The United States government would only allow Clark to testify at the UN tribunal for the former Yugoslavia if the hearings were closed to the public. Washington insists that material deemed to harm its national interests be removed before a taped version of the hearing is made public on Dec. 19. Clark, who is seen as one of the more serious Democratic party challengers to US President George Bush in the 2004 presidential race, commanded Nato forces during the war in Kosovo in 1999. He spent dozens of hours negotiating with Milosevic in the buildup to the Nato bombing of Kosovo and Serbia. Milosevic is being tried on more than 60 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in the 1990s wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo that tore apart the Balkans. *AFP*

### Karzai seeks strong powers

KABUL—Afghans launched a crucial meeting on Sunday to approve a constitution to take the country to its first free elections and President Hamid Kazai defended his bid for a strong presidency, calling it vital after years of war. Amid tight security after Taliban threats, the Loya Jirga, or Grand Assembly, finally got under way in a giant tent at Kabul polytechnic campus after successive delays earlier in the week. The gathering is expected to last from 10 days to several weeks, with vigorous debate expected on many of the 160 articles of a published draft constitution, including Islam's role and women's rights. But the central theme is the sweeping power sought by Karzai, which critics and rivals want diluted by a stronger parliament. *Reuters*

### Israelis kill 2 in Gaza

GAZA—Israeli soldiers shot dead two Palestinians trying to sneak into Israel from the Gaza Strip on Monday and troops fought gun battles with militants during a raid into a refugee camp overnight, security sources said. The two Palestinians were killed overnight when troops opened fire on a group of people approaching Gaza's border fence with Israel, the sources said. *Reuters*

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2003
ISSN 0116-2642
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 19 No. 555
Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

# OPINION

The Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. has its business and editorial offices at
• Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
• P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
• Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
• Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 • Advertising 897-4807
• Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
• 100% soy ink •

*Publisher* **Isagani Yambot**
*Editor in Chief* **Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc**
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# Saddam's capture

**EDITORIAL**

SADDAM Hussein, the dictator of Iraq who sowed fear, terror and violence in his country for more than 24 years, has finally been captured. Unlike his sons Qusay and Uday, who chose to fight it out and died in a blaze of gunfire, Saddam gave up meekly to American forces in his hometown of Tikrit. Probably he was taken entirely by surprise. Or probably he realized that any resistance would be useless.

Saddam's capture should help stabilize the situation in Iraq, but it will not mean an immediate end to the resistance being put up by Iraqi groups to the American occupying forces. His arrest has taken out a tyrant who could be a rallying point of a movement for the return of the despotic regime. It has also taken out a source of financing for the Iraqi terrorist attacks.

Saddam's capture may have some immediate international economic implications. It may result in fewer sabotage attacks along Iraq's vital northern oil pipeline and allow Baghdad to increase its oil supplies to the world market. With an increase in Iraq oil exports, international oil prices might soften. This would benefit developing countries like the Philippines that use a lot of oil for transportation and industry. The revenue from increased oil exports would also help fund the reconstruction of Iraq.

Saddam's capture will benefit US President George W. Bush who is running for reelection. It will boost his position after the United States' failure in Afghanistan and the hundreds of deaths that the US forces suffered after their supposed victory in Iraq.

Bush has realistic expectations about Iraq. He said that with Saddam's capture, he did not expect the violence in the country to stop. The resistance to the American occupation comes not only from the Saddam loyalist forces but also from Iraqi and Arab mujahideen who do not want any foreign forces to remain on their native soil. Mustafa Alani, an analyst at the Royal United Services Institute in London, said he expected the Iraqi resistance to now have a more nationalist dimension.

The preferable course of action would be to restore peace and order throughout Iraq and then turn over the reins of government to responsible and freedom-loving Iraqis. But this is easier said than done. There are 15 to 30 groups that were not under Saddam's control or influence, and they can be expected to continue their attacks on the American forces.

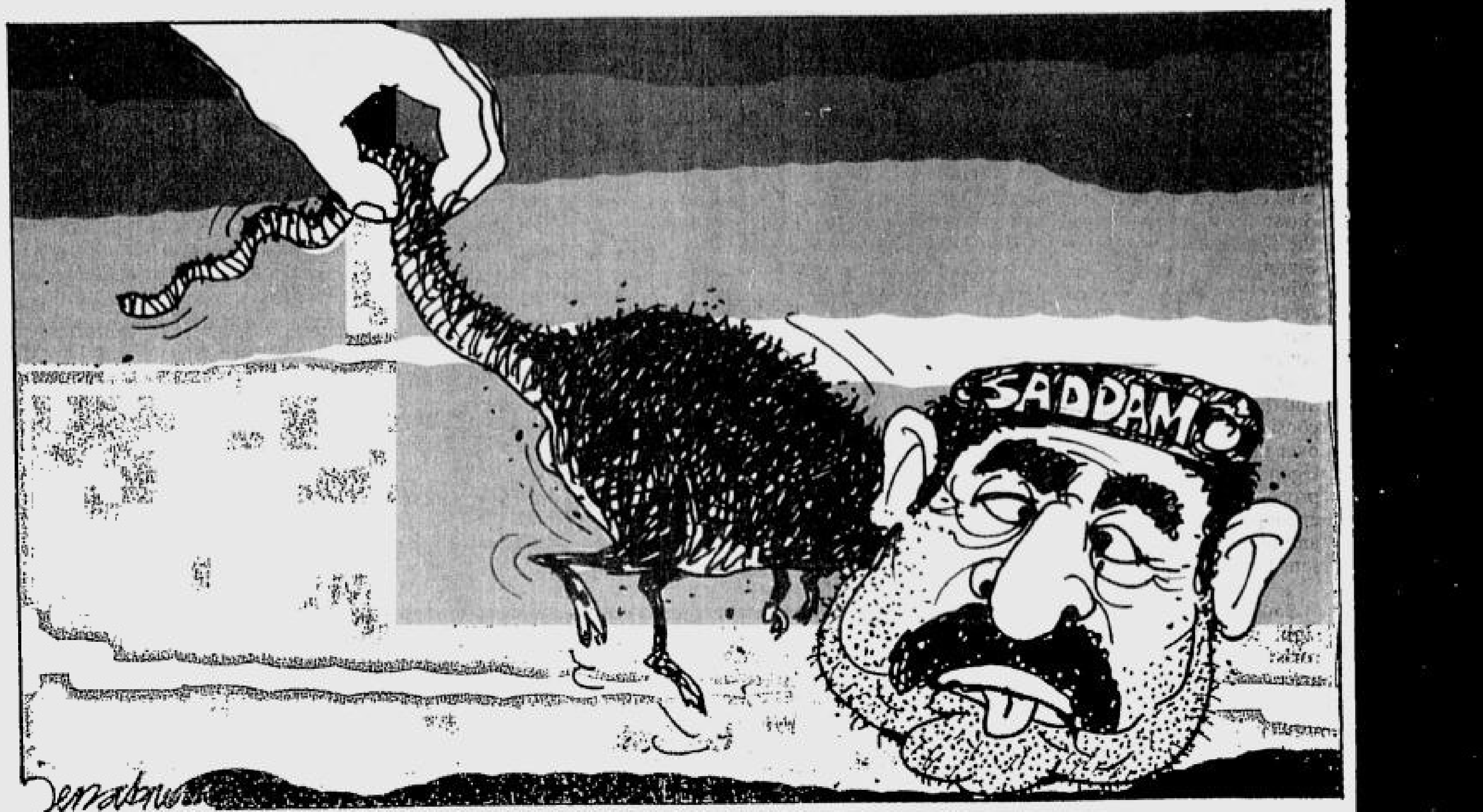
Toby Dodge, an analyst at Britain's Warwick University and International Institute for Strategic Studies, said that one option for Bush would be to call it a victory and cut and run. But an immediate withdrawal by allied forces, he said, would be a disaster for Iraq, for the Middle East and for the strategic interests of the US in the region and beyond.

This seems to be a fair assessment. The US and its allies have the moral responsibility to see to it that the foundations for long-term stability are laid in Iraq.

There is no doubt that the capture of Saddam was an intelligence and propaganda coup. It comes as a timely morale booster for the American troops who have suffered hundreds of casualties after the fighting in Iraq supposedly ended. It is a psychological turning point in the continuing conflict in Iraq. But it should not stop the US and its allies from continuing with their work of pacification and reconstruction in the war-devastated country. It will take some time to set up democratic structures and to choose the people who will run the new government.

Then there is the matter of putting Saddam on public trial. Ahmad Chalabi, a member of Iraq's Governing Council, said that Saddam has to stand a public trial so that the Iraqi people would know his crimes. Saddam, the butcher of Iraq, has committed many crimes against his people; there can be no real closure to the long, dark regime of the dictatorship until justice has been meted out to him.

The world will now await the next move of the United States and its allies. The situation in Iraq will stabilize somewhat but much still has to be done to return it to normality and to insure that despotism in whatever form will not return to repress, terrorize and brutalize its people. Sovereignty has to be returned to the Iraqi people but it should be done under the best possible conditions.



# Mathay vs Belmonte; Aiko vs Ara in QC polls

**As I See It**

*Neal H. Cruz*

IT WILL be an interesting fight in Quezon City in next year's elections. Former Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. is running against reelectionist Mayor Sonny Belmonte. Mathay had reached the three-term limit when Belmonte, a three-term congressman, ran for mayor three years ago, so the two haven't really fought for the hearts and minds and votes of QC residents. Now they will.

This early, the betting is that Mathay will return to the City Hall that he had run for so many years.

Mathay and Belmonte are opposites. Mathay is approachable; Belmonte is not. When he was mayor, Mathay was very visible to his constituents; Belmonte is not. Mathay's City Hall was open to the public; now QC residents can hardly have the ear of their mayor.

Quezon City has the biggest number of squatters and Mathay was then thought to be a squatter coddler, but Belmonte has turned out to be more so—at least to the legitimate homeowners of Doña Nicasia Subdivision and Pansol. The squatter syndicates there are out of control and the harassed homeowners are not getting any help from City Hall. Although the Department of Interior and Local Government has ordered, several times, the ejectment of the professional squatters, City Hall is dragging its feet in obeying the orders, citing the Lina Law and the Urban Poor Commission as excuses. But elections are just around the corner and squatters are also voters, so what do you expect?

But the squatter vote is a myth, at least in Quezon City. Politicians of all stripes—from barangay officials to councilors to mayors to congressmen—cultivate the squatter vote here. That is why Quezon City has the most squatters in the Philippines. But at least three very notorious squatter-coddlers in Congress were defeated in their reelection bids. Every time there was squatter demolition in Quezon City, these congressmen were there to stop the demolition. They thought these endeared them to the squatters and their votes. But when election time came, they didn't get enough votes. The congressmen didn't know what hit them.

What hit them was the collective anger of the law-abiding residents who got fed up with their antics that emboldened the squatters to abuse the rights of property owners. Besides, squatters are an ungrateful lot. You may have helped them for years, but during election time, they sell their votes to the highest bidders and turn against their benefactor.

Legitimate homeowners in Quezon City, victimized for years by squatters and politicians, have learned their lesson. Residents of subdivisions along Congressional and Commonwealth Avenues are now banding together to vote down squatter-coddlers. They are inviting other homeowners' associations victimized, harassed and threatened by squatters and their politician-friends, to join them. A dream is to have a nationwide confederation of homeowners so that politicians won't take them for granted. Imagine what a voting bloc it would be if the plan materializes.

But going back to Mathay and Belmonte, it looks like their tickets will split the showbiz community. Belmonte's running mate will be Vice Mayor "Bistek" while Mathay may have actor Rudy Fernandez as his vice mayoral candidate. Mathay will run in the FPJ-led United Opposition coalition; Belmonte will run with the administration party.

Mathay's son, Representative Chuck, is running for reelection in the 1st district, against former Rep. Dante Liban and, according to rumors, Councilor Aiko Melendez, an actress. To counter Aiko's charms, Chuck is reportedly going to allow his daughter, none other than the shapely actress Ara Mina, to campaign for him and his dad.

So during the election campaign, it would be as if there is a parade of stars for a film festival every day and night in Quezon City.

By the way, during the many years that there were other congressmen representing Quezon City's 1st district, none of them helped get the remaining 1.6 kilometer stretch of Congressional Avenue completed. None except Chuck Mathay. Even now, senators and congressmen who are living in subdivisions along Congressional Avenue (among them Senators Noli de Castro and Juan Flavier and Representatives Abad, Fuentebella and Lopez) are not doing anything to have funds appropriated to complete Congressional which would greatly ease the traffic congestion along the parallel Commonwealth Avenue. Neither do they appropriate a part of their pork barrel for the project. Only Chuck Mathay is doing that.

A federation of homeowners associations along Congressional Avenue, Focals (Federation of Congressional Avenue Lot and Subdivision owners) have been working for years to have the avenue completed, not only because they have to pass through other subdivisions to go home although they are astride a main artery, but also because squatters are proliferating in the road right of way. This is a case of self-help and slowly, very slowly, with the help of the Department of Public Works and Highways and Representative Mathay, Congressional is being finished.

A vexing problem is the squatters infesting the road right of way. The frontline agency here is the local government unit, but the government of Quezon City has not lifted a finger to help. Whom do you think residents will vote for next year?

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: "They're burning your effigy!" Erap was told.

Erap: "*Sobra na sila. Pati ba naman ang kumpare kong si* FPJ *ay sinusunog nila?*"

# Different times, different chimes

**There's the Rub**

*Conrado de Quiros*

THERE is a difference in the way people reacted then to Erap's presidential bid and the way people are reacting now to FPJ's presidential bid. The sense of alarm is more palpable. I've heard it repeated of late, this particular month being devoted to gatherings (trying to avoid them is like trying to avoid traffic). The usual way it's phrased is: "If FPJ wins, I'm going to join the 19 percent that wants to leave the country." That lament wasn't there in 1998, or it wasn't being said that loudly.

Concededly, these are middle-class gatherings, not those of the poor. I did ask our laundry person who comes a couple of times to our place what the talk is in the crowded community lining up Agham Road where she lives, but she says rather diplomatically that her neighbors are gripped by more pressing concerns than politics.

The difference, at least as far as the middle and upper classes go, and at least as far as I can gather, lies in three things.

The first one has been articulated by Rodolfo Biazon. A staunch LDP member for more than a decade, he had no problems supporting Erap because Erap learned the ropes over the years. Erap had been a politician for a couple of decades before he sought the presidency. He was variously mayor of San Juan dating back to Marcos' time, senator and vice president. One might question his learning curve—Time magazine would later assess his abilities as being applicable only to local conditions; he tried to run the country like San Juan, with disastrous results—but one had to give him credit for experience.

FPJ is nothing of the kind. He has absolutely no experience in politics. That is what bothers Nene Pimentel as well, who ran under Erap's banner in 1998. FPJ isn't just making a jump from movie star to mayor, or congressman, or senator. He is making a jump from movie star to president. That is Evel Knievel's dream of jumping the Grand Canyon with a motorcycle.

The argument that FPJ has a good heart and therefore will make a good president is like the argument that someone has a pretty face and therefore will make pretty movies. It doesn't follow. A good heart is to running the country as a good face is to acting. Unfortunately, that has been made to follow in local movies, which is populated by pretty girls and boys who can't act—with disastrous results. The same results are bound to happen to the country.

That brings us to the second difference: Those disastrous results have happened, and from a movie star, Erap, who had the advantage of paying his dues en route to Malacañang. FPJ's candidacy is not unlike martial law the second time around. Marcos' success in declaring martial law in 1972 owed in large part to the public's willingness to flirt with it. No one knew how it would turn out and many were willing to pay to see how it would. And pay they did. Now the slightest whiff of martial law, Part 2, raises hackles.

Erap's success in seeking the presidency in 1998 owed in large part not just to his popularity among the *masa* but to the willingness of the middle and upper classes to flirt with him. No one knew how he would turn out and many were willing to pay to see how he would. And pay they did, though they asked for a refund with Edsa II. Now the idea of another movie star—and one whose record in serving the people lies in scripts rather than in textbooks—running the country raises hackles.

That brings us to the third difference. My reference to martial law isn't just metaphorical, it is also literal. I've heard it articulated this way: If FPJ wins, he will bring back, if not martial law itself, the people who ran it. Those were the same people who helped Erap in 1998, and those are the same people who are helping FPJ now. Lest we forget, both Erap and FPJ campaigned for Marcos in the 1986 "snap elections," Erap's goons even going around in San Juan beating up Cory's supporters. FPJ did his bit too, entertaining in Marcos rallies, along with Nora Aunor. The political company FPJ keeps is the Marcos people, people with track records (written in textbooks) of messing up the country.

Edgardo Angara belongs to that camp. He was Marcos' appointee as UP president before he went into electoral politics after 1986. The perception that FPJ will not be in control but will be the plaything of those behind him is little dispelled by Angara looming large in the background. Malacañang's complaint that FPJ is Angara's dream of ruling by proxy can't be taken lightly.

It's enough to truly sympathize with those who say they will join the footloose 19 percent of the population if FPJ wins. It is tempting in light of this to imagine that FPJ would go the route of Danding Cojuangco in 1992—"any one but." But there is a difference there too. Cojuangco wasn't very popular to begin with, certainly not to the coconut farmers. FPJ is, even to leftists like Crispin Beltran. What is likely to happen, if the fear of FPJ grows among the middle and upper classes and the passion for FPJ swells among the poor, is a confrontation between the Edsa II and "Edsa III" forces. Between the rainbow coalition that ousted Erap and the teeming horde that tried to prevent him from being jailed.

But whatever happens, FPJ won't walk away from it unscathed. It will be a lesson for him in realpolitik. Unlike being in the movies where you only foster goodwill, and where, as in his case, you can control what the "movie scribes" say about you, in politics you can foment only ill-will, and you won't be able to control what the press and the public say about you. There is a steep price to pay for power, as Erap knows by now.

Christmas is a good time for Da King to ponder if he is prepared to pay it.

# Campaign against NPA's political extortion

### POLITICAL TIDBITS

*Belinda Olivares-Cunanan*

THE INQUIRER had bannered the passing of Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, but when the news came in last Sunday evening about the capture of former Iraq strongman Sadam Hussein, editor-in-chief Letty Magsanoc decided to remat the front page to banner the Iraq event. She boxed Ople's death on the front page's upper half with a huge photo of him, thereby demonstrating the impact of both events.

Ople's sudden death in Taiwan stunned the nation, for while he was not in good health, there was no inkling about his sudden heart attack. I had a brief chat with Assistant Secretary for Asean Affairs Susan de Ocampo-Castrence who was in Tokyo with the presidential party for the recent Asean-Japan Summit and she noted that Ople looked rather tired. When he left for Bahrain he was running a slight fever. Castrence recalled that a number of DFA officers expressed some concern over whether he could withstand the rigors of the Bahrain visit.

Ople was held in respect by the administration and the opposition from where he sprang. He was considered an intellectual giant and his triumph over the poverty during his youth is the stuff of legend. He remained very soft-spoken and approachable to the media up to the end, and in my encounters with him, he would call me "BOC," and never my first name. My condolences to Susan Ople and the family.

* * *

**Saddam's capture held an immense historic significance for the world. For while the terrorist attacks against US and foreign troops are not expected to suddenly cease with his arrest, it will to lead to a de-escalation of tensions in that part of the world and hasten the reconstruction of war-torn Iraq. More significantly for US politics, it is expected to boost the stock of US President George Bush who has been faltering lately in the surveys. Saddam, after his arrest was a pathetic figure, looking so tired and dejected with his long beard, as he was being checked medically, a far cry from the powerful despot who held sway over life and death in Iraq for over two decades.**

* * *

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita has decried the "fund-raising" activities of the New People's Army among politicians in the provinces, who are required to secure a "permit-to-campaign" in rebel-infested areas during the campaign period. Ermita opined that the NPAs have intensified this form of extortion to make up for the loss of foreign contributions due to the tightening campaign against terrorist activities overseas. He estimated that the NPAs demand P500,00 from candidates for Congress to be able to campaign unmolested, from gubernatorial candidates at least P300,000 and from mayoralty bets between P50,000 to P300,000. The INQUIRER story said the the rebels could raise at least P2.25 billion during the election season unless such exactions are stopped.

* * *

**The NPA's extortion has been the bane of local politicians for years, jacking up their already gargantuan election expenses. But it took two party list representatives to seek a way to openly combat this seasonal form of "revolutionary tax." Ironically, the principal author is counted among the militant Left in the House. Former street parliamentarian Rep. Etta Rosales and Mario Aguja of Akbayan have filed House Bill No. 3581, seeking to criminalize the collection of "revolutionary tax" and campaign fees by the communist rebels as "harassment" and an "extortion attempt." Rosales opined that candidates ought to be able to campaign without fear from "armed non-state groups" to ensure honest and peaceful elections.**

**The good thing is that while the effort to counter the NPA's extortion began from the initiative of the Akbayan reps, some 31 party list and district legislators have already signed up as co-authors, among them Rep. JV Bautista of Sanlakas, Patricia Sarenas of Abanse! Pinay, Mujiv Hataman of Mindanao, Kim Bernardo-Lokin of Cibac, LP president Butch Abad, Eduardo Nachura and Rolando Andaya. (What about Rep. Satur Ocampo? Where does he stand in this issue?) Rosales is gathering as many signatures as possible, and her group is conducting a campaign among people's organizations and church groups to protest the NPA's activities. I must say that this is a courageous move on Rosales' and Aguja's part, considering that they are considered part of the Left. I salute them.**

**By the way, I recently learned that two Bayan Muna representatives, labor leader Crispin Beltran and Lisa Masa, resigned last Nov. 1 from the House, in order to organize different party-list groups in preparation for the May 2004 elections. Among the groups they are seeking to organize and strengthen are Anakpawis and Gabriela.**

* * *

Our colleague and downstairs neighbor on this page, Rina Jimenez David and her husband Pie David, a San Miguel Corp. executive, recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary with a Mass and renewal of vows at the Archbishop's Palace in Mandaluyong, and a lovely garden reception at the poolside of Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. The early December weather was celebrating with this lovely couple, for in addition to sparing the reception from rain (the next day the weather soured), there was a full moon to boot which made the oldies but goodies music sound even more romantic. Rina, resplendent in a grey satin evening gown, spared no effort with the details of her anniversary celebration, with the tables named after virtues that serve married life well, such as "Generosity" and "Compatibility." We columnists all look for our own niches, and Rina has carved hers with feminist issues, of which she is a leading exponent. My congratulations to the Davids. I wish them continued love, success and good health in the next 25 years.

# More Baguio bliss

### AT LARGE

*Rina Jimenez-David*

PERHAPS the best news for retailers and shoppers in Baguio this Christmas season can be found atop the hill that dominates the skyline at the other end of Session Road, up from the market. This is where the new SM Baguio stands, on the site where the old Pines Hotel once stood. And as expected, and experienced elsewhere, an SM mall becomes an immediate magnet for traffic—of shoppers, leisure seekers and the plain curious—as well as for traffic of the vehicular sort.

Our friends Mike and Edna Anton, who invited my husband and me for a few days' R&R in Baguio, asked us over for lunch at their latest Sizzling Plate outlet on the lower ground level of the new SM, on the same floor as the supermarket and the food court.

SM Baguio doesn't quite "feel" the same as other malls in the chain. The architecture is just one reason. Breaking away from the claustrophobic "box" design that characterizes most other SM malls, the one in Baguio is more fluid and open, with a wrap around balcony on all four aboveground levels. The balconies, meant to maximize the magnificent views of the surrounding mountains, also help loosen up the atmosphere. Wide-open doors allow the cool mountain air to rush in, though most outlets have air-conditioning. And it may be just the novelty of it, but the people also seem more relaxed and openly curious about the mall's wonders.

By design, most of the restaurants and eateries are located on the outside ring nearest the balconies, which allows the outlets to set up tables and chairs out in the open. So although one is dining in a mall, it can feel like having a repast at home in the garden, out in the sunshine, enjoying the magnificent view amid relative quiet.

* * *

**STILL, if it's fine dining you want, there's a place for you in Baguio. Salud isn't exactly new, but it was the first time my husband and I were going to try it. I had heard and read so much about the place, and had promised Patis Tesoro, whose daughter owns the place with her chef-husband Paul Poblador, to visit the place on my next trip.**

**And so we planned this outing, including an orientation "tour" by Edna who drove us by in the afternoon to make sure we didn't get lost that evening. True enough, finding "Salud" can be quite a challenge, as it's located on a narrow street in Lourdes Subdivision, tucked away on a steep hillside.**

**But it is, as the guidebooks say, "worth the trip." Set in the Tesoros' old vacation house, the restaurant boasts funky, eclectic interiors that have been described as "shabby chic" but could also be called "yard sale" specials. The vibes were good as we entered, with '60s music (think soundtracks of old Doris Day-Rock Hudson movies) in the air.**

**We found it hard putting a finger on Salud's cuisine, finally settling on "casual French." We found the tomato expresso soup and *sopa de ajo* excellent, and thought the textures and flavor combinations of the tilapia with crabstick rice and the catfish wrapped in bacon interesting. Certainly worth a second visit!**

* * *

RESPONDING to the column on "Eyesores," Butch Jimenez, vice-president for media and communications of Smart Communications, wrote to say that his company "immediately took the initiative to review and evaluate its advertising strategies taking to heart (the inputs of Mr. Silva)." The column was based in part on an e-mail message circulated by John Silva of the National Museum criticizing the blanket coverage of the countryside all the way from Manila to Baguio by Smart's banners and pennants.

Jimenez wrote to say they had already invited Silva to "share more of his ideas with us towards coming out with 'creative branding techniques' that would allow us to strike a balance between our advertising objectives and maintaining the inherent beauty of each locality." He also explained that the "marketing drive" was done only in the context of "one specific event," the Ad Congress. Advertisers like Smart took the opportunity to "highlight its marketing and advertising efforts," to "showcase the wide range of advertising and marketing possibilities available to the industry." There was no intention to "brand" the roads "simply in the name of commercialism," Jimenez added, clarifying that the target market were members of the advertising industry and only in the context of the Ad Congress.

* * *

**MANY local governments have seen the possibility of "partnering" with Smart in their activities, Jimenez said, so they expect to continue being "visible" during local events and celebrations. Silva's inputs, they hope, "will contribute towards our company developing the proper advertising and marketing strategy as Smart endeavors to be part of the Filipino way of life."**

**I, too, hope to see how Silva works with Jimenez and the other "Smart" folks on how they can pursue both marketing and sales objectives without destroying the integrity and beauty of the environment. The way I see it, it's simply a matter of priorities, and businesses have to decide at times to simply let the profit motive take second place to the greater good.**

**Meanwhile, the Ad Congress is long over, and since those banners and streamers were put up only in the context of this one event, one would expect them to have been torn down and stored by now. But on the way up to and down from Baguio, I saw many of these collaterals in place, and looking the worse for wear. The most basic responsibility of a company (or candidate) that engages in such marketing gimmicks, to my mind, would be to tear down what they have put up and leave the surroundings looking as they did before they made their presence felt.**

# Jack Frost & Co.

### SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

*Bambi L. Harper*

IN THE PAST month, I've been to Los Angeles, New York and Connecticut visiting friends and relations. It was a crystal clear night on the flight from LA to NY and the captain was so taken with the view (it apparently doesn't jade), he urged passengers look out at the city's glittering lights. It was a sight that takes your breath away and you can understand why such an awe-inspiring yet vulnerable cityscape provokes mixed emotions: love, hate and, no doubt, envy. To those 19 Saudis it obviously symbolized the might and perhaps the pride of a people they considered the enemy.

It reminded me that no matter how often one sees the Colosseum or the Eiffel Tower from a glorious vantage point, it doesn't cease to awe. It's the kind of view that the builders of those cities could never have hoped to see in their day. Yet it's something we take for granted.

Lucky for me, I arrived the day before the first blizzard of the season and I imagine for anyone who's had to put up with shoveling the snow from his driveway or digging a car from under an icy blanket or tending to a furnace so it won't break down, it's not the greatest time of year. It's understandable why people migrate to California or Florida; after a while the snow, especially after a few days when it turns to slush, is decidedly inconvenient, ugly and dangerous especially for the elderly. But still with that first snowfall there is something magical about it even if Jack Frost is nipping at your nose and you're freezing your buns off.

New York is not America in the same way that Manila is not the Philippines. However, it remains a vital, pulsating city that fires up the visitor's imagination and at this time of year dazzles with Christmas decors and lights. The day after the storm kept us pretty much at home tooling around with warm cups of coffee and four layers of clothing. But the following day with a sky as "blue as forget-me-nots are blue" was an open invitation to get on with visiting friends in Manhattan.

I have to tell you that there's no snob like the Pinay who, after hearing me announce that I had never seen the other four boroughs of Manhattan, declared that it didn't matter since there wasn't anything to see there anyway. Next I protested that I hadn't seen the Statue of Liberty either, the Empire State building or the site of the Twin Towers. I did visit the American Express office but that was several years ago before certain people decided to make nuisances of themselves.

Despite all these protestations, I still haven't seen any of these sites. I have promised myself that I will book an architectural tour of NY next time to ensure that at least I get to see Harlem, which of course I have been warned to look at only from a train window. We did however hop (this is poetic licensed—it felt more like plodded, being weighed down with woolens, coats and boots that felt like one had lead soles) on the train, grabbed a cab driven by a Pakistani (who proceeded to sing the praises of Guiliani and the shortcomings of Bloomberg) and made it to the Museum of Natural History to view the Petra exhibit that I was conned into seeing by glowing reviews. Having amassed romantic ideas about this "rose-red city half as old as time itself," we were disappointed to see nothing much except numerous pieces of broken stones. Their architecture was influenced strongly by the Greeks and Romans (who conquered it), but it was nothing like exhibits on Egypt, for instance, or even the excavation of Ur.

From there we caught a bus to the Metropolitan, a museum that is never disappointing. There was an El Greco exhibit sans "La Muerte del Conde de Orgaz," but with many more paintings gathered than I remembered even from Madrid's El Prado. It showed the development of the painter from his early works influenced by Byzantine icons—only two having survived time and tide. The word "mystical" is used to describe his later works and perhaps the feeling could be evoked if the viewer weren't surrounded by a multitude of bodies that actually sent the temperature soaring. The best time to be a tourist here would probably be the day after Christmas when others have gone home.

No matter how jaded one gets with age the windows at Sak's 5th were still enchanting. People stood in line to peer closely at the fairy tale animation figures and the word "magical" again comes to mind. With the snow and the glowing lights and our country's problems far from mind for a moment there, it felt like Christmas. What is it to me if Halliburton scammed the US government as compared to a sinking feeling that not one of our lawmakers knows what to do about our $58 billion debt? It was a pleasure though not to have to think about it.

US security may be feeling more relaxed this season as no one bothered with my shoes even after I offered to remove them. Nor were they interested in my bags that carried mostly books and magazines. P55 to the dollar is a great deterrent when shopping although a lot of the stuff comes from China (Guatemala, Burma, and Brazil, too), and why should I spend hard-earned money abroad when I can buy those at our own *tiangges*? Now as for those Guccis, Pradas, Manolos and Dior, I am not even dreaming. It's really inconceivable to look at handbags costing $3,000 (or even more) and compute that to mean over P150,000. I imagine this must be the reason why so many people in this country have taken to stealing: How else can you amass closets full of the stuff? There being no point, naturally, in owning just one pair of designer shoes with no matching bag to boot.

# One-way ticket

### YOUNG BLOOD

*Irene O. Curtis*

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.*

EITHER we're gonna live or we're gonna die. If we die, we gotta deal with being dead. If we're alive, we gotta deal with being alive. Sounds simple enough, but not quite.

Being dead is easy. You just go on your merry way to where dead people go. But the moment of dying is not that easy. Dying is a painfully short process that has both its good and bad points. Monochromatic memories play in full color, vague feelings get stronger definition, and the desire to turn things around is strong. The problem is, you can't. There are not enough miracles in the world for heaven to randomly give away. The competition's tough and, well, somebody has to keep the entire life cycle going. Nobody knows who's the next lucky stiff to do it. It could be me. Or it could be you.

Life is a mighty serious business. If you've got no management and decision-making skills, you're in serious trouble. Survival demands time, lots of time. Time that is being wasted on procrastination, bitterness and a claptrap existence—the story of anyone over four years old.

Everybody's got issues to deal with, some real, the others products of a myopic view of life. Anyhow, people get a kick out of owning an issue, manufactured or not. Drama with all its accompanying elements is one heady aphrodisiac. Pain and anger can take you to great heights. What's more, you'll never get better excuses to lash out at life than these two. A pretty explosive combination that works wonders for those "who have arrived," people who've channeled all their worldly gripes to their blooming careers while they set aside things that used to matter. Like family—most especially family.

The world calls them lovely butterflies that have came out of their cocoons. I call them mutants.

They're special, they're powerful and and they're a sorry bunch of lost souls, always searching for family and acceptance. I'd think that these supposedly smart people wrongly prioritized the latter over the former, judging from how miserable they are in their comfortable beds at night.

Apparently, they weren't told that gazing beyond what we cannot see, towards the dreamy landscape that might be found beyond the horizon, is a futile attempt at trying to find real happiness. Happiness could be growing beneath our feet and we would not even notice, so thick is the blanket of fear, frustration and bitterness keeping us immobile in the dark and dank places we have caged ourselves in. Years of nurturing these albeit very human emotions can banish every last vestige of warmth in our lives and a shot at happiness.

Beauty, fame and fortune—the necessities of this custom-made society—it seems like the mutants have got them all. They are the ones who like to work hard, party hard and live hard. But the truth is, they've got nothing and they know it. That's the reason why they cry just as hard.

A dear friend of mine once told me that I should grab the chance to live the good life while I'm still young and able. "Take me, for example," she said. "Despite my poor background, I'm respected and feared by everybody. I look great for my age. I'm rich. I have an even richer husband. I can afford to live a spoiled, lazy life. Money and power and everybody's respect. I have it all."

Then it came: "But I'm not happy."

Now, how was that supposed to convince me? In a less serious conversation, I would have smirked my way back home but as it was, her last statement was just too heavy and too depressing to warrant any reaction. I really felt sorry for her, so I suppressed the urge to gloat.

There she was, a wonder woman who leaped from the other side of the fence and straight into the big time—Armani and Gucci coats, Italian stilettos, manicured nails, a fat checkbook, boxes of baubles, bank accounts, a BMW, a fawning entourage—a trés chic beauty and brains, and a tough, jaded moneymaker with the sophisticated and cool exterior, and she wanted to cry like the little girl in her past. Her life was spent chasing big dreams that were supposed to make her complete. Well, what do you know? They didn't.

Rich people are extremely insecure creatures who always look at those around them with suspicion. After all, how can any filthy rich Midas be sure that he's not being "loved" and accepted only for his gold?

Along the way, my friend's family and a loved one became casualties of her one-track trip to the top and her inability to give and take love. The yellow brick road to the big city was set heavily on top of rotting soil cultivated by spiteful words, painful scenes and bitter exchanges.

'Fess up. We all have said some things and acted in ways that have hurt people deeply too many times. And most of them are the last persons we want to hurt. Somehow it is easier for us to ridicule and maim those we love and those who care for us the most. Sad but true.

My friend had tried to backtrack and begun to escape more frequently to an old dream in which the people she has always loved and who love her back unconditionally surround her. She had taken a detour from this simple goal but now she planned to carry out her simple, "insignificant" plans, like having a quiet chat with a friend, playing with her son, making up with her family. All because she realized that her money could not buy people's love or solve her petty issues, anymore than it could make her maintain a convenient, loveless marriage or make her self-hate and hatred for her treadmill existence go away.

She was finally going to be free, loved and genuinely happy. She flew to the United States planning to stop arguing with the past, take an overdue break from work and stress, and to set things right when she got back. A couple of weeks later, she was dead. Aneurysm. Doctors said cerebral accidents like this do not come from overwork, they are caused by frustrations.

Now I can't help but wonder what could have been going on in her mind as she lay in a coma. I don't know if she was crying inside or thinking about her dashed plans. But I know she didn't die happy.

To the rest of the world, she will be remembered as an extremely classy dame with sharp brains, a compelling presence and a real success story. To her family, she will always be the headstrong sister who put sleeping pills on her old folks' milk so she could go to the prom.

But to me, she will always be a sad figure in the dark whose life gave a more profound meaning to two words: too late.

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*Irene O. Curtis, 21, finished journalism at the University of Sto. Tomas and works as a freelance scriptwriter.*

The INQUIRER is a member of the
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# To import rice now is unnecessary

I would like to respond to some news items regarding my reported opposition to the request of some farmer organizations to be allowed to import rice during the current harvest season.

First of all, I am the duly elected chair of the Philippine Farmers Advisory Board (PFAB), and as such, I represent the farmers sector in the National Food Authority (NFA) Council. The PFAB consists of farmer leaders representing all the regions and all the major national farmer organizations in the country.

The few farmer organizations proposing to undertake the imports are ably represented in the PFAB and were given the full opportunity to present their case to the PFAB during our meeting last Nov. 5, 2003. However, their proposal was voted down by a vast majority of the PFAB members mainly because it would result in a further decline in farmgate prices during the current harvest season that would extend up to early next year. It is therefore dishonest for them to now claim that the PFAB is supporting their proposal, or that I am misrepresenting the position of the rice farmers by opposing their proposal.

The proponents of the import proposal were given rice import quotas on the condition that they would bring in the stocks before the end of the lean months, or by Sept. 30, 2003. They would then be able to help stabilize prices during the July to September period when farm production is usually at its lowest level. For one reason or another, they were unable to bring in about 200,000 metric tons of rice quotas. The country is simply lucky that prices remained stable during the lean months despite their failure to live up to their responsibilities.

Now, these same farmer groups want to bring in the 200,000 metric tons just when farmers are harvesting and recovering from previous typhoons and calamities. It is ironic that while these groups often criticized the NFA in the past for importing during the harvest season, they are now the ones advocating to flood the market with imported stocks even when farmers are harvesting. They are even expressing fears that shortages will crop up and prices will increase if they are not allowed to import, even if they fully know that we have more than enough supply at the moment, and prices are actually going down, precisely because harvests are reaching their peak.

President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the implementation of the Farmers as Importers (FAI) program with the intent of enabling legitimate farmer groups to share in the benefit from the imports. The proposal of these few groups to import during the harvest season will penalize the very farmers whom they purport to represent and will obviously run counter to the president's good intentions.

The NFA Council actually turned down their proposal already last Oct. 8, 2003. However, they have even persistent, and have now resorted to impugning my reputation in the media. I have only one vested interest, and that is to protect and promote the interests of the small farmers that I represent. I hope they will respect that and consider the wider interest of the farming sector that they too claim to represent.

**—RAUL Q. MONTEMAYOR,**
**national manager,**
**Federation of Free Farmers**
**Cooperatives Inc.,**
**41 Highland Drive, Blue Ridge,**
**Quezon City**

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# Fetal rights, children's rights

**PINOY KASI**

*Michael L. Tan*

"IF A MAN helps a woman have an abortion which would result in their child's death, he will be sentenced to three to six months imprisonment; on the other hand, if that very embryo is not killed and gets to become a 14-year-old boy or girl and then his/her father kills him/her intentionally, that brutal father will receive a less severe punishment!"

That passage is from an article by Shirin Ebadi, this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner. An Iranian lawyer, Ebadi was awarded the prize for her efforts to reform her country's laws within a framework of human rights.

The first woman Muslim to win the Nobel Prize, Ebadi recognizes how religion can be used to violate human rights, but insists that reforms are possible from within the system. She does this by pointing out the inconsistencies and contradictions in the penal codes. The observation I used at the beginning of my article is an example, and comes from a 1997 article, "The Legal Punishment of Murdering One's Child."

In that article, Ebadi first describes very detailed provisions in Iran's Islamic Penal Law when it comes to abortion. Anyone who causes an abortion can be sentenced to three to six month's imprisonment but if it is the father of the fetus who causes the abortion, the punishment is imprisonment plus payment of *diya* or "blood money," a kind of financial settlement made to the aggrieved party.

Now if it is the mother who causes the abortion, she has to pay blood money but is not imprisoned, which Ebadi describes as a more compassionate attitude. The blood money to be paid depends on the stage of pregnancy. Aborting "a fertilized sperm placed in the womb" means blood money of 20 dinars, going up to 60 dinars for "an early fetus," 80 for "an embryo which has grown bones but not muscular tissue" to 100 for "a fetus whose bone and muscular tissue has fully developed but lacks a soul".

Ebadi's article does not explain how "ensoulment" is determined but apparently, if the embryo is considered to have acquired a soul, then the blood money to be paid is equivalent to that paid for an adult. Like adults, however, the embryo's "value" is gender-based: female embryos, like adult women, only deserve half the blood money paid for males.

Ebadi points out that given all these very detailed provisions in the laws, the unborn are actually better protected than children already born. A male who murders his son, grandson or great-grandson, for example, only needs to pay blood money with "discretionary punishment," which Ebadi says can be as light as "one lash of a whip."

The inequities in Iranian law may seem archaic but we have a similar paradox in the Philippines. Our Penal Code also has detailed provisions on abortion, prescribing as much as *reclusion temporal* imprisonment from 12 years to 20 years for someone who uses violence to induce an abortion in a woman. If a woman requests an abortion, she and her abortionist can be punished with *prision correcional*, which means imprisonment ranging from six months to six years of imprisonment.

If you read the provisions on abortion very closely, you'll realize how fixated the law is over female chastity, with several references to abortion as a way of "concealing dishonor." This fixation is reflected as well in our definitions of murder and homicide. A person who kills his or her own child will be tried for parricide, which can be punished with life imprisonment. Yet a much lighter punishment of *destierro* applies to a parent who kills a daughter (note, a daughter but not a son) if she is below the age of 18, living with her parents and is caught having sexual intercourse. The same lighter sentence applies if the parent kills the daughter's "seducer" after catching them having intercourse.

What is *destierro*? It is the same as *prision correcional*, imprisonment of six months to six years. In effect, our Penal Code is saying that a daughter's life, and that of her lover, is equated to that of a fetus if she is sexually indiscreet.

Let's face it, laws such as those that I just described are concerned less with the sanctity of life than with controlling women and punishing female "dishonor." Note how abortion is usually depicted by conservatives as the selfish act of "loose" young girls who get pregnant out of wedlock. The conservatives refuse to deal with the fact that most abortions involve older married women with unplanned pregnancies, the numbers of whom are going to rise precisely because the present government has made access to family planning more and more difficult, supposedly because a "contraceptive mentality" leads to abortion.

Our claims that we love children sound hollow when you look at the number of cases of abandoned and neglected children, of children battered and sexually abused often by their own fathers, of children forced to work in conditions more harsh than those of adult workers. Christmas only highlights our "love" for children, as we see child vendors out in the streets selling flowers, sometimes toddlers forced to carry infants on their backs so motorists will feel more pity and buy the flowers.

I remember one Christmas a few years back, when the incumbent Vice President and social welfare secretary put up a large billboard in the Greenhills Shopping Center urging motorists not to buy flowers from the child vendors and to donate money instead to a charitable institution. I regret not having photographed that billboard, especially when the child vendors would gather beneath the sign, almost as if in defiance, so they could string their flowers.

The billboard has long been dismantled but the child vendors are still there, selling the flowers deep into the night. The secretary who put up that billboard is now our President, one who spends more time speaking out against abortion and family planning than launching concrete programs for the Filipinos already born, for the Filipino children being born, four of them each minute of the day.

# Maging tunay na makamasa,

# LOCAL SECTORAL REPRESENTATION (LSR)

# ISABATAS NA!

Habang abala na ang lahat sa darating na eleksyon, nakabinbin pa rin sa Senado ang isang panukalang batas na tunay na makakatulong sa masa: ang Local Sectoral Representation (LSR).

Sa LSR, ang mga kinatawan ng masa, o batayang sektor, ay iboboto upang umupo sa mga lokal na sanggunian. Nakatadhana sa Saligang Batas at sa Local Government Code, ang LSR ay isang reporma ng lipunan at sistema ng elektoral:

- Palalawigin nito ang partisipasyon ng masa sa pamamahala
- Masisiguro nito na ang pangangailangang pangkaunlaran ng mamamayan ay natutugunan

Bilang tugon sa pagsisikap ng masa, ipinasa ng House of Representatives ang LSR bill (H.B.5781) noong June 2003. Umasa ang masa na makalalahok sila at makapagpatakbo ng kanilang mga kinatawan ngayong darating na eleksyon.

Subalit, natutulog pa rin ang LSR sa Senado, partikular sa Committee on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws ni Senador Edgardo Angara.

Ang patuloy na pagtalikod ng Senado sa tungkulin nitong ipatupad at bigyang buhay ang isang kautusan ng batas at ng lipunan ay pagbalewala sa makabuluhan at demokratikong pakikilahok ng masang Pilipino sa pamamahalang lokal.

**Kay Senador Angara...Sana po kayo ang magbigay daan sa pagsasabatas ng LSR. Inaasahan namin ang committee hearing at pagkakaroon ng committee report sa lalong madaling panahon!**

**Sa ating Pangulo Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo...Sana po pakinggan ninyo ang boses ng NAPC Basic Sectoral Representatives at i-certify agad bilang prayoridad ang LSR!**

**Sa ating mga Senador...**
**may panahon pa, isabatas na ang LSR!**

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Advt.

**NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU**
Room 201, Bonuan Apartelle
10 Happy Glen Loop, Baguio City
Tel. No. (074)443-9255
Fax No. (074)443-8971
E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

**SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU**
23 Aurora St., Old Albay District
Legazpi City
Tel. No. (052) 820-8402
Fax No. (052) 820-1274
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

# Across the NATION

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

**VISAYAS BUREAU**
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 233-0346/233-0349
Fax No. (032) 232-9938
E-mail: pdivis@skyinet.net

**MINDANAO BUREAU**
FEP Printing Corp. Bldg.
Ma-a Road, Davao City
Tel. No. (082)244-1770 to 71
Fax No. (082)244-1771
E-mail: pdiminda@dv.weblinq.com

# 9 kidnap suspects slain in clashes

**GOVERNMENT** troops stand in attention as anti-kidnapping chief Angelo Reyes gives a briefing after a Bataan raid that led to the killing of alleged kidnap leader Roberto Yap last month. The government has vowed to bring the war on kidnapping to the provinces, where syndicates are likely to search for havens to flee the heat in urban areas. JOAN BONDOC/PDI PHOTO

**CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao—At least nine suspected Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang members and two government troops were killed in two-day skirmishes between kidnappers and soldiers in Maguindanao.**

Brig. Gen. Agustin Demaala, 301st Infantry Brigade chief, said Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas were dragged into the offensive launched by the 37th Infantry Battalion to rescue kidnapped Filipino-Chinese car dealer Norman Sia.

The MILF said the Army was attacking MILF positions in the guise of pursuing kidnappers Saturday and Sunday in the boundary of Datu Piang and Talitay town, both in Maguindanao.

"This is the problem, the MILF is coddling the kidnappers. We have to run after them even if they sought refuge in MILF areas," Demaala told the INQUIRER.

He accused a certain MILF Commander Talio of protecting Pentagon gang members who are asking P10 million for the release of Sia.

Pentagon gang members seized Sia, 25, during negotiations for the sale of Kia Pride car on Dec. 8.

Eid Kabalu, spokesperson for the MILF, said Sia was not brought to the boundary of Talitay and Datu Piang.

"He was not there, if he's there, the MILF could have arrested his captors and turned them over to the government as provided for in the . . . ceasefire agreement," Kabalu said.

Demaala said the MILF group providing security for Pentagon was big enough that the Army had to use two-MG 520 attack helicopters and OV-10 bomber planes.

"No air strikes were conducted, the planes provided aerial security for ground troops," he said.

Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF vice chair for political affairs, said a coordinating committee on the cessation of hostilities have taken steps to defuse the tension even as he denied that the MILF was coddling kidnappers.

Hundreds of civilians in the villages surrounding Talitay and, Datu Piang have moved to safer grounds as operations continued Monday amid heavy downpour.

Search operations are also underway for the recovery of a certain Cpl. Dionat and an unidentified militiaman allegedly taken hostage by the MILF fighters.

The 6th ID said elements of the 37th IB have been very careful in its operation to avoid clashes with the rebels.

Demaala said a civilian informant have accompanied government troops in running after Sia's kidnappers.

"But our troops learned that the kidnappers are in the company of Commander Talio and Commander Wahid of the MILF," Demaala said. *Edwin Fernandez, Charlie Señase, Rosa-May de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

# Countdown for church's 100th yr starts

**By Desiree Caluza**
*PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

SAGADA, Mt. Province—Members of the Anglican-Episcopal Church in this tourist town last week started the countdown to the mission's centennial anniversary next year.

The countdown started on Dec. 8, the feast of St. Mary the Virgin and the town's fiesta. Residents, most of them members of the Applai tribe, remembered the effect of the mission on their lives especially during World War II.

The late anthropologist Alfredo Pacyaya, in William Henry Scott's "A Sagada Reader," remembered the town's celebration on Dec. 8, 1941, when the war broke out in the Pacific.

"What a contrast! Five minutes ago all the people had joyous smiling faces. Now they were shocked and silent. Even the children, who knew nothing about the war, showed signs of anxiety, (without) knowing why," Pacyaya said.

Pacyaya said it was only when the fighting reached Sagada in January 1942 that the residents realized that the world indeed was at war.

The community that is now Sagada was built through the help of American Anglican-Episcopal missionaries in 1904.

Residents said American missionaries drew sympathy from Igorots who brought them food and other necessities in a Japanese concentration camp in the capital town of Bontoc.

Anglican-Episcopal priest Jerry Sagayo said the natives welcomed the faith brought by American missionaries "because it did not oppress the people."

"The countdown to the centennial is a celebration that would look back on the substance of the Anglican mission on our lives," Sagayo said.

Mayor Thomas Killip said the country's 300-year colonization by Spain demonstrated the "unlimited powers" held by friars in the country.

Killip, in the editorial of the newsletter "Mensapit," said the Anglican-Episcopal faith was used to "pacify" the Igorot "savage" to transform him into a Christian with a more universal outlook.

The Anglican-Episcopal Church arrived alongside the invading American colonial power at the turn of the 20th century.

"No doubt that the Episcopal Church in Sagada, with its various institutions such as our school and hospital, has succeeded in elevating us from our primitive ignorance into a more schooled and scientific mind," Killip said.

But he said in the process of transformation, "we lost some of our traditional practices, customs, values and systems that were not altogether anti-Christ or anti-people."

Killip said the "liberating" aspects of the Anglican-Episcopal Church ministry freed the people from ignorance and taught them how to look at the world with broader and more scientific dimensions.

# Army exec says communist rebs human rights violators, too

LEGAZPI CITY—Government troops also cried for justice in the recent worldwide celebration of Human Rights Day.

Army Maj. Jose Broso, commander of the Civil Relations Group (CRG) based in Camp Ola here, said a total of 105 cases of human rights violations were committed by New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in Southern Luzon this year.

Broso told the INQUIRER that from Jan. 1 to Dec. 3, the NPA killed 11 in Southern Tagalog and 95 in Bicol.

He said the reasons for the killings vary. Some were killed due to failure to pay revolutionary taxes while others were summarily executed on suspicion that they were cooperating with the government's campaign against terrorism.

Of the total number of victims, Broso said Camarines Sur has the highest with 29 cases followed by Albay with 27 while Sorsogon ranked third with 17. Masbate has 12, while Camarines Norte and Catanduanes have 5 each.

He also said of the 105 victims of liquidation, 70 were civilians and the rest were military, police, and civilian agents.

Broso also said more often than not, "Victims were tortured and killed in the presence of their families to underscore the NPA's desire to sow fear in the community."

"Some were abducted and killed after being forced to dig their own graves," he said.

Broso said children are recruited as combatants in violation of the Geneva Convention, which specifically prohibits the recruitment of children less than 15 years as combatants. *Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

**PREPAREDNESS** AFP

Members of the Philippine Army's Light Reaction Co. perform a mock assault during counter-terrorism training at the Clark ecozone last Dec. 12. The training was held with logistics assistance from the United States.

## ROUNDUP

### 5 die in Laguna mishap

SAN PABLO CITY—Five persons died while nine others were injured, when a wayward passenger jeep crashed into a parked tricycle then hit a group of passersby along a downhill road in Barangay Sta. Maria Magdalena this town on Thursday night. Raul Mendoza, 33, jeepney driver, told police that his jeep lost brakes and hit a tricycle where driver Arnel Dorado was resting along the national highway from Calauan to San Pablo City. The collision caused Mendoza's jeep to turn turtle and roll at the other side of the road hitting five people walking on the roadside. The jeepney then hit an approaching Mitsubishi Lancer car driven by former Calauan vice mayor Joseph Brion, who suffered broken shoulders after the collision and was rushed to the San Pablo District Hospital. Dorado died instantly while victims Riza Hernandez, 23; Lovella Villalon, 15; Carmela Aquino, 23; and Conrado Cartabio, 77, died while being rushed to the hospital. All victims were residents of Barangay San Buenaventura this city.

*Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

### Village chief, tanod killed

DUMAGUETE CITY—Suspected members of the New People's Army shot dead a barangay captain and a barangay tanod (village guard) in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. David Sadangnot, 57, barangay chair of Tinayunan Hills, and his *tanod* Larry Rojo were riding a motorcycle on Dec. 9 when waylaid by two armed men in Sitio Mabunga, Guihulngan town. The gunmen fired at the victims and before leaving the crime scene, left behind a typewritten letter signed by one Leonardo Panaligan, believed to be an NPA leader, detailing Sadangnot's alleged crimes against the people.

*Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

### 'War without rules'

TAGBILARAN CITY—A militant human rights group assailed the Army's 15th Infantry Battalion based in Bohol for "waging war sans rules." Karapatan-Central Visayas said its fact-finding mission on the Nov. 20 clash in Sitio Pasta, Barangay San Isidro, Mabini town showed that the soldiers finished off the wounded rebels and fired their guns indiscriminately, wounding civilians in the process. Suspected rebels Ronilo Cabacoy, 18, and Buenaventurado Potane, 40, were killed in the encounter at the house of Martiano Asas. Karapatan, in a statement signed by Msgr. Feliciano Nalzaro Jr., said that based on the testimony of the Asas family and their neighbors, the soldiers riddled the house with bullets, wounding Bebiana Asas, Martiano's wife and their two sons.

*Chito Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau*

# Muslim detainees' kin seek new probe of cases

COTABATO CITY—Families and friends of Muslim detainees who were arrested in connection with government's crackdown on terrorism have asked Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong to order an investigation of their cases.

In a statement, Amirah Ali Lidasan, secretary general of the Moro-Christian Peoples Alliance (MCPA), said her group has communicated with Datumanong, a Muslim, to immediately review not only former Gov. Nur Misuari's case but "our Muslim brothers who have become fall guys" in the government's drive against terrorists.

She was referring to reports that Datumanong has approved the reinvestigation of the rebellion charges against the former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) leader.

"We hope that his decision to review Misuari's case is not just Datumanong's contribution to boost President Arroyo's sagging popularity," she said.

Efforts to reach Secretary Datumanong proved futile.

"We pray that this investigation would finally pave the way for the release of other Muslims who were arrested, charged even without probable cause and detained," she added.

Lidasan said most of those detained were arrested simply because they were Muslims.

She also expressed hope that Datumanong would order the immediate resolution of the kidnapping cases against some 100 detainees from Basilan, Zamboanga and Sulu.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front backed Lidasan's call, saying most of those arrested are sons and daughters of MILF fighters.

"It would add injuries to Moro people who have been suffering from injustices inflicted by the Philippine military," said Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson.

The MCPA listed around 124 Muslim detainees in Camp Bagong Diwa, Bicutan, suspected of being Abu Sayyaf members and two men from Maguindanao who were arrested last year after they were suspected of being members of the MILF's bombing squad. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

# 'Jueteng' draws more bets as holidays usher in cash

**By Tonette Orejas**
*PDI Central Luzon Desk*

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—The illicit numbers game jueteng is brisk now more than ever in Central Luzon because of the Christmas holiday season, INQUIRER sources in the police and jueteng circle said.

A police official said people are placing more and bigger bets because Christmas bonuses, dollar remittances from overseas Filipino workers and cash gifts from relatives abroad make the local economy awash with cash.

The official's observation was confirmed by several *kubrador* (bet collector) interviewed by the INQUIRER.

"*Maragul la reng taya da uling mas atin lang pera ngeni reng tau* (Bets are bigger because people have more money now)," said a bet collector in the City of San Fernando.

The collector said bettors stake more to win bigger amounts because consumer spending is high during Christmas.

Jueteng financiers, however, are not known to increase the prize money. A P1 bet is still equivalent to a prize of P800 should the bettor's two-number combination wins.

Like in past Christmases, financiers are not expected to hold special draws. In Central Luzon, draws are held thrice daily at 1, 5 and 9 p.m.

Collectors are, however, happier. Bigger and more bets placed means that they will earn more. They get 15 percent for every P1 that is staked.

The police official said jueteng financiers give out as much as P1 million monthly in protection money in Angeles City, P700,000 in Mabalacat and P300,000 in the City of San Fernando.

What is sure is that local officials were expecting campaign contributions from jueteng financiers in the May 2004 elections, the official said.

Election watchdog groups and even the Roman Catholic Church in Central Luzon's seven provinces were not known to have launched campaigns against candidates suspected of receiving jueteng money.

In the past 11 months, jueteng operations continued despite a crackdown on illegal gambling.

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 8, Camp Olivas reported conducting 1,203 raids against jueteng.

More raids were conducted in Bulacan (390 operations), Pampanga (274), Nueva Ecija (161) and Tarlac (111).

Jueteng exists in all of Central Luzon's provinces, including Aurora.

The bets confiscated amounted to P1.39 million and were submitted to local courts as evidence in 1,081 cases filed against jueteng suspects.

# Salve Bush beats FPJ to the draw

From page A1

started yesterday, with at least 12 unknown presidential aspirants filing their certificates of candidacy with the Commission on Elections.

Rigoberto Madera Jr., 56, signed his name as "N. N. N." and listed his occupation as "Messiah." He said he was a six-star general whose real name was Nanjnaaan Nallalasnkeyjgodn Narmannahaisn. He said he was also "Ace Diamond Commander-in-Chief on Earth," sent by God to unite the people.

German Valladarez of Silay City, who submitted his certificate with a photo showing him flashing the international money sign, said the joined thumb and forefinger meant money while the three raised fingers signified that money was "for me, for you'" and "for the people."

Valladarez, 61, said he was an evangelist who envisioned a benevolent society with the unemployed getting a million pesos each for their livelihood projects while those with jobs would get a million pesos in bonuses yearly.

To solve the insurgency problem, Valladarez said he would propose the integration of all armed forces, including the communists, separatists and other groups, with each being given a day of the week to handle security.

He also said he wanted changes in the currency, saying that he would ask that Philippine "dollars" be printed.

Salvé Bush, 47, was the first woman candidate. According to Comelec employees, she had told them that she was "engaged" to the US president whom she saw on television and that she wanted Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda to be her running-mate.

In her certificate, Bush said she was "married" and was the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino-United Opposition standard-bearer.

**EDDIE Gil flashes victory sign after filing his certificate of candidacy for president.** REUTERS

To a man, courteous Comelec officials refused to comment on the first batch of candidates.

## First aspirant

The first person to file his certificate of candidacy was Leopoldo Salud, who listed his nickname as "Juan dela Cruz" and his occupation as an information technology salesman.

He was followed by businessman Eddie Gil, who said he was nominated by the Partido Isang Bansa Isang Diwa.

Others who filed included Ricardo Daniac, a naturalized Filipino citizen who said that he was an "international healer"; account executive Antolin Garcia; businessman Luisito Bacani; engineer Victor Paul Monteverde; Bartolome Padilla, a farmer from Pangasinan; Alfonso Celmar, taxi driver; and Gregorio de Leon, a missionary-taxi driver from Quezon City.

Asked why he was running, Valladarez said he was emboldened by the rising number of voters who supported him from his first campaign as barangay *kagawad* (councilman) in Silay City to his second as congressman. He said he got 7,000 votes when he ran for Congress.

The filing period ends on Jan. 2, but Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said he was in favor of extending it up to Jan. 5 because of the holidays.

Abalos said this would depend on whether the agency would still be able to meet its deadlines.

## Main candidates

The main presidential candidates, however, are likely to file their certificates of candidacy at the last minute.

A campaign supporter of ex-Sen. Raul Roco said Roco was waiting for the other candidates to make their move.

"It's a matter of tactics," the supporter said, adding that there was nothing to gain by filing ahead of the others.

Action star Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson are still threshing out who between them would run as the opposition's standard bearer.

TV broadcaster Sen. Noli De Castro is also being convinced by businessmen and politicians to run for president.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is running for a full term, is in Bahrain on a state visit.

"I don't think anyone would file early. Everyone's still positioning themselves," Roco's supporter said.

## Serious contender

One serious contender for the presidency did not file his certificate of candidacy yesterday, but he did declare his intention to contest the election.

Brother Eddie Villanueva, spiritual leader of the Jesus Is Lord Fellowship movement, yesterday made the announcement in Club Filipino in San Juan.

He said he intends to answer his "call of duty as a patriotic Filipino" and solve the country's social ills, such as poverty, corruption, crime and drugs.

"We shall take this urgent call for change to all our beloved countrymen from the lowliest farmer and fisherfolk, all the way up to the presidency," Villanueva said in a rousing 40-minute speech punctuated by cheers from about 300 supporters who packed a ballroom of the Club Filipino.

"I have felt the widespread and overwhelming clamor for change. I have felt the need to respond to the call of duty offered to all patriotic Filipinos. I am paying the highest sacrifice for our nation," he added.

Asked about his chances against the other candidates, Villanueva likened himself to the Biblical David who fought against the giant Goliath.

"I know that David defeated Goliath because God was with David. Besides, I believe in the silent majority," he said, to the cheers of his supporters.

The JIL claims a membership of 7.1 million in the Philippines alone. It has 33 chapters in different countries, the largest of which is in Hong Kong which counts some 20,000 members.

Among those who attended yesterday's event and expressed support for Villanueva were basketball players Marlowe Aquino, Jose "Jayvee" Gayoso, Avelino "Samboy" Lim and Alfredo "Pido" Jarencio, former National Economic and Development Authority Chair Cielito Habito; actresses Coney Reyes and Donita Rose, and singers Kuh Ledesma and Gary Valenciano. *With reports from Dona Pazzibugan, Alcuin Papa and Jerome Aning; Reuters, AFP*

# PNP starts enforcing Comelec's gun ban

From page A1

gun permits, including the permit to carry firearms outside one's residence, were suspended until after the May elections.

"The public should realize that we are only implementing the Comelec resolution regarding the election gun ban," Razon told the INQUIRER.

He said the suspension would mean that the PNP would accost civilians who would bring guns outside their houses.

Police and military officers and security guards also have no business carrying firearms after duty.

Based on Comelec Resolution No. 6420, the ban will stay until June 9, 2004. The resolution, distributed to all police districts in the country, prohibits the "bearing, carrying or transporting firearms or other deadly weapons in public places including any building, street, park, (private or public) vehicles."

Throughout the election period, candidates can have no more than one bodyguard. Razon said a bodyguard could be issued either a pistol not more powerful than a 9 mm or a long firearm not exceeding the level of a 22-cal. rifle.

Police personnel are barred from serving as security details for candidates.

The new alert status will translate into greater police visibility especially at checkpoints the PNP earlier set up all over Metro Manila to combat kidnap-for-ransom syndicates and other criminal groups, according to Senior Supt. Joel Goltiao, PNP information officer.

Goltiao said the new alert status might run until June 9, the end of the Comelec gun ban. He said police regional chiefs could change the alert levels depending on the situation in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

He said gun owners wanting to apply for exemption from the ban should go straight to the Comelec's firearms and security division, not to the Firearms and Explosives Division of the PNP's Civil Security Group.

In the House of Representatives, Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos urged the military and the police to come up with measures to protect journalists covering the elections.

Marcos said the hazards of the job for members of the media had gone up several notches because the election period officially started yesterday.

"Criticizing political personalities during these times is extremely dangerous. Politicians are now doubly sensitive about their image and would go to extraordinary lengths to protect it," she said.

"The same goes for their powerful political patrons who have their interests to think about. Quite literally, it is now open season and media people are the quarry," Marcos said.

At least 73 journalists have been killed since 1986, most of whom were critical of certain political figures, according to the congresswoman. Nelson Nadura, a popular broadcaster in Masbate, was the latest casualty.

"We recognize the difficulty of preventing attempts at silencing media people but the Armed Forces and the PNP could start by focusing on election hotspots. We must have a peaceful elections, and keeping the press safe is a paramount concern," she said. *With a report from Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.*

# Misa de Gallo...

From page A1

mas Eve.

The happy results so gladdened the community that the people decided to do the same thing again and again. Other villages heard about it and did the same, until it became a cultural milestone.

In earlier days, according to a document released by the Manila Metropolitan Cathedral in Intramuros, Manila, a brass band played Christmas music around town while priests knocked on doors to wake up the faithful in time for Mass.

Today, while still called a dawn Mass, the rite has undergone changes and sometimes is even held at night.

The nine-day novena, the document said, is a "significant moment not only because it strengthens relationships among family members but also because it is the time where faith is intensified ... the time where we mostly feel the presence of the Lord because it is the spiritual preparation for the birth of Christ."

"The blessing does not depend on the number of Masses attended, but what is important is the disposition of the person who receives the Lord's blessing," the document added.

## Native delicacies

The tradition is not complete without the feast of native delicacies, such as *bibingka* (rice cake), *puto bumbong* and *salabat* (ginger tea), that can be bought from stalls that usually line church courtyards.

Another Filipino Christmas practice is the "*panunuluyan*" or visitation, which is held during Christmas Eve. The Christmas playlet reenacts how St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary went from house to house and the birth of Jesus Christ in a manger.

The Misa de Gallo should not be confused with the Misa de Aguinaldo, or the Mass of the Gift, which is celebrated on Christmas Eve. *With a report from Ray Leyesa, PDI Research*

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## WORLD'S BYWORD

SADDAM CAPTURED

**NEWS** of Saddam Hussein's fall spreads to the Philippine Stock Exchange ... AP

'THEY GOT SADDAM'

... **TIMES** Square in New York ... AFP

Daily Times

... **PAKISTAN'S** capital of Islamabad ... AP

SADDAM SMOKED OUT

... **CALCUTTA** in India ... AFP

...**AN** Indonesian court in Jakarta ... REUTERS

... **SHANGHAI** in China ... AFP

... **AND** a newsstand in K. Lumpur. REUTERS

# GMA hails arrest, sees more jobs for Pinoys

MANAMA, Bahrain (via PLDT)—President Macapagal-Arroyo and other Philippine officials yesterday hailed the capture of Saddam Hussein, saying it should pave the way for the speedy reconstruction of Iraq and open the door for the deployment of more Filipino workers in the war-ravaged country.

"Since Day One, we were with the international coalition for the liberation and reconstruction of Iraq, and this event is a milestone in that historic effort," said Ms Macapagal, who is on a two-day official visit to Bahrain.

"We have deployed our peacekeepers and humanitarian workers in that country and we shall continue to stand by beside the Iraqi people in their quest for democracy and prosperity," she added.

Roy Cimatu, special envoy to the Middle East, said he expected Saddam's capture to lead to stability in Iraq and enhance the job prospects of Filipino workers who have long been waiting to get a crack at reconstruction projects there.

"I am definite the attacks (on US troops) would die down and accelerate the start of the reconstruction projects," Cimatu said.

He said the Philippine labor attaché in the Middle East had received a lot of job orders from various foreign companies in Iraq. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

# World cheers capture but asks: What's next?

From page A1

fell and the dollar rose on Monday as markets celebrated the news, but any gains were expected to be fleeting as investors worried about global security and US deficits.

"This is a major event which should strongly contribute to the democratization and the stabilization of Iraq and allow the Iraqis to once more be masters of their destiny in a sovereign Iraq," French President Jacques Chirac said on Sunday.

China, another opponent of the war and an influential Security Council member that favors a strong UN role in Iraq, took a similar line.

"We hope that the latest development of the situation in Iraq is conducive to the Iraqi people taking their destiny into their own hands," Liu Jianchao, spokesperson of the Chinese foreign ministry said.

The governments of Indonesia, Bangladesh and Thailand expressed similar hopes.

"It is our hope that his capture will help speed up the process of reconciliation and the transition toward a democratic government of Iraq, where sovereignty is restored in the hands of the Iraqi people," Indonesian foreign ministry spokesperson Marty Natalegawa said.

### Boost for Bush

Saddam's capture was a huge boost for US President George W. Bush and his main ally in the war, British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Both leaders have seen their popularity hit by an increasingly messy occupation.

Bush hailed the end of "a dark and painful era" in the history of Iraq but he cautioned against expecting a sudden drop in violence that has killed more American soldiers in Iraq than the war itself did.

"Let this be more than a moment for simply rejoicing. Let it be a moment to reach out and reconcile," Blair told reporters, before declining to take questions.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder took a similar line in a telegram to Bush. "I hope the capture will help the international community's effort to rebuild and stabilise Iraq," he wrote.

Arab and Middle Eastern leaders who had opposed the war shed no tears for the Iraq dictator.

"Saddam Hussein was a menace to the Arab world," said the Saudi ambassador to the United States, Prince Bandar bin Sultan.

Gunfire crackled in celebration around Baghdad and across Iraq. Kuwaitis, whose occupation by Saddam sparked the US-led Gulf War in 1991, were elated.

"Until he was finally killed or captured, there was always the fear he would come back. This will lift an enormous psychological burden off the Iraqi people," Australian Prime Minister John Howard said.

A spokesperson for UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said the arrest could give fresh impetus to efforts to pacify Iraq.

### Safer Iraq

South Korea welcomed the news, which came hours after its government made a final decision to send 3,000 troops to Iraq.

**IRAQIS** celebrate in front of the Communist Party headquarters the capture of Saddam Hussein Sunday in the Karrada neighborhood of Baghdad, Iraq. AP

**PERJIN** Jaffer (left) and Samira Jaha dance and sing as they celebrate the capture of Saddam Hussein during a peaceful gathering on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Canada. AP

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who is contemplating when to send troops of his own, expressed the hope that Saddam's capture would help make Iraq a safer place.

"We hope this will lead to an improvement," he said, adding that any dispatch of troops would depend on security in Iraq.

Iran, whom Saddam fought during most of the 1980s, joined in the call for the fallen dictator to pay for what he had done. "Saddam should be prosecuted because of the crimes he has committed against the Iraqi and Iranian people," Vice President Mohammad Ali Abtahi said.

While many Iraqis welcomed the capture of Saddam, many Palestinians, who saw him as one of the few Arab leaders to stand up to Israel, expressed shock.

As Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon telephoned Bush to congratulate him, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and his government refrained from comment.

Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi, a senior Hamas leader, said the United States would "pay a very high price for the mistake" of capturing Saddam."

Across the Arab world, many expressed joy that Saddam would never return to rule Iraq. But others were disappointed that he was captured by Americans and saw his surrender as a stain on Arab honor.

"What the Americans are doing in Iraq and everywhere else is humiliating," said Samer Saado, a flower shop employee in Damascus, Syria. "There's nothing to say we're not next in line."

News of Saddam's capture was greeted with dismay and disbelief in the Arab-dominated West African nation of Mauritania, a country with historical Baath Party ties to Iraq.

"He is an unforgettable hero, who always kept his word and never agreed to sell out his ideas and his principles," said lawyer Khattri Ould Taleb Jiddou, a former government minister.

Mauritania supported Iraq in the Gulf War, broke with it in 1999, and was mentioned as a place of exile for Saddam at the start of the US-led invasion.

"This is the worst news possible," said 70-year-old Fatimetou mint Sidi.

### El Salvador

In Afghanistan, talk turned almost immediately to the hunt by US-led forces for Osama bin Laden, the al-Qaida leader who has evaded efforts to track him down for more than two years.

El Salvador President Francisco Flores, who has dispatched nearly 400 troops to Iraq, called Saddam's capture "a very severe blow to one of the terrorist logistics bases of the world."

In Mexico, President Vicente Fox sent a message to Bush "expressing his satisfaction" with Saddam's capture.

Fox said he hoped Hussein's detention would help bring peace to the region and "an end to the terrible loss of human lives in the past few months" in Iraq.

Relations between Mexico and the United States chilled noticeably after Fox refused to lend his country's support to the war against Iraq. *Reports from Reuters and AP*

# Saddam fall leads to more arrests

From page A1

US President George W. Bush had warned attacks would not stop even with Saddam in custody.

Saddam's exact whereabouts on Monday were unclear. US officials said he had been moved to a secret location but remained in Iraq, Hertling said. CNN and the Dubai-based Arab TV station Al-Arabiya reported Saddam had been taken to Qatar. A spokesperson at US Central Command would not give information on Saddam's location.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said Monday it hoped US authorities would let it visit Saddam to check on the conditions in which he was being held. It declined to comment on whether the United States had breached international law by publishing photos and video images of Saddam after his capture.

### Trial in few weeks

Saddam could be tried "in the next few weeks" and could be executed if convicted, said Mouwafak al-Rabii, a Shiite member of the Iraqi Governing Council told AP on Monday. Other council members said a trial would likely begin later.

"We will get sovereignty on the 30th of June, and I can tell you, he could be executed on the 1st of July," said Al-Rabii, a longtime human rights activist.

The former dictator was captured by Special Forces during a massive raid on a farmhouse near his hometown of Tikrit, according to Capt. Desmond Bailey. Troops from the 4th Infantry Division guarded the area while Special Forces found Saddam and pulled him out of a narrow hole.

"We have him," they radioed to division commanders nearby, Bailey said.

The tip-off came from an individual arrested in Baghdad on Friday and brought to Tikrit on Saturday morning for an interrogation that made clear Saddam was in the area, according to Col. James Hickey, who had led the raid.

Soldiers were seconds away from throwing a hand grenade into the hole when Saddam surrendered, Hickey said.

Saddam was hiding in a plastic foam-covered underground hideout near one of his former palaces in Tikrit late Saturday. He was disheveled and had grown a thick beard, and though he was armed with a pistol, the man who waged and lost two wars against the United States and its allies did not resist or fire a shot.

The lack of communications equipment in Saddam's cramped quarters indicated the ousted dictator was not commanding the resistance, said Maj. Gen. Raymond Odierno, whose 4th Infantry Division troops staged the raid.

"He was just caught like a rat. When you're in the bottom of a hole you can't fight back," Odierno said.

### Painful era over

Saddam will now "face the justice he denied to millions," said Bush, whose troops and intelligence agents had been searching in vain for Saddam since April. "In the history of Iraq, a dark and painful era is over."

The United States had posted a $25-million bounty for Saddam, as it did for Osama bin Laden, the leader of the al-Qaida terrorist network still at large despite a manhunt since November 2001.

It was not known immediately if anyone had a claim to the Saddam reward, though US forces found him after receiving information from an Iraqi—a member of a family close to Saddam, Odierno said.

Within three hours of the tip, troops were at a farm in Adwar, 16 km from Tikrit, where they found the former president in a hole.

"My name is Saddam Hussein," the fallen Iraqi leader told US troops in English as they pulled him out of the dank hole where he had been hiding. "I am the president of Iraq and I want to negotiate."

A US Special Forces soldier replied: "Regards from President Bush," according to Maj. Bryan Reed, operations officer for the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

### 'They got Saddam'

Eager to prove to Iraqis that Saddam was in custody, the US military showed a video footage of the ousted leader, haggard and gray-bearded, as a military doctor examined him. In Baghdad, radio stations played jubilant music and some bus passengers shouted, "They got Saddam! They got Saddam!"

But some residents of Adwar recalled fondly how Saddam used to swim in the nearby Tigris River and bemoaned the capture of the leader who donated generously to area residents.

"This is bad news to all Iraqis," said Ammar Zidan, 21. "Even if they captured Saddam Hussein, we are all Saddam Hussein. We want freedom and independence from the Americans."

But US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Saddam was not helping. "He has not been cooperative in terms of talking or anything like that," Rumsfeld told CBS' "60 Minutes" on Sunday.

Rumsfeld told "60 Minutes" that Saddam would be accorded the rights of prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention, but added that any participation by Saddam in the insurgency against coalition troops might lead to a different classification.

With Saddam's capture, 13 figures remained at large from the US military's list of 55 most-wanted regime officials. The highest ranking is Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, a close Saddam aide who US officials say may be directly organizing the resistance. AP

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(In exact order)

SUERTRES
1 3 6

MEGALOTTO 6/45
5 16 17 25 27 45

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

# METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

# Lawmen ready to shift to election mode

By Luige del Puerto, Tarra Quismundo and Edson Tandoc Jr.

WITH the crime rate reportedly declining, the police are ready to shift to election mode.

"We are ready to be deputized by the Comelec (Commission on Elections)," according to Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela, newly appointed head of the Eastern Police District.

Valenzuela is expecting the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktaf) to implement a smooth transition of operations as the election period goes underway.

"The transition should not be a problem," Valenzuela said in a phone interview. "The current chokepoints, for example, would later also serve as Comelec checkpoints."

The election period officially started yesterday—the first day of the filing of candidacy. It will end on June 9 next year.

Valenzuela said that although his office has not yet received an order from the Comelec deputizing the police to enforce election laws, they are ready for it.

"We have done this many times before, so we know what to do," he said. "Actually by now, we should be (in election) mode already."

The Philippine National Police's Directorate for Personnel and Records Management has recently issued guidelines on the conduct of the election period.

These included prohibitions against the carrying of firearms and other deadly weapons in public places, unless authorized in writing by the Comelec, and the transfer of officers and employees covered by the Civil Service.

The organization or maintenance of reaction forces, strike forces or similar forces is also prohibited, the memorandum said.

So far, the police mobile checkpoints have been effective in deterring crime, according to Western Police District Director Pedro Bulaong.

"There has been a decrease in crime volume in the past days," said Bulaong in an interview yesterday.

Police units, augmented by Marine and Army troopers, have been carrying out spot checks in key areas in Metro Manila since last week.

Yesterday, patrolling policemen arrested another suspected robber in Caloocan City.

Serv Aces Manpower employee Joseph Galbilao chased and cornered the suspect, Cesar Zaballa, and recovered the P120,000 in cash, according to National Capital Region Police Office director Ricardo De Leon.

While Galbilao was chasing the suspect along 6th Avenue, he caught the attention of PO2 Reynaldo Codog and PO1 Tirzo Roncales, who promptly aided the victim.

Northern Police District director Marcelino Franco said that the failed holdup proved the effectiveness of police patrols.

## Policemen to tighten watch on churches

METRO Manila policemen would be joining the faithful to churches today for the beginning of the traditional dawn mass.

The public would get to see uniformed policemen inside churches, as Western Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong yesterday encouraged his men to attend the dawn masses in uniform so that the public would know that policemen are god-fearing persons.

"Our policemen do go to churches," he said in a phone interview yesterday. "I'd just like to suggest that they go to church in uniform so that people could identify them."

National Capital Region Police Office director Ricardo De Leon said that although mobile patrols would be deployed to the churches, the job of actually securing the premises would fall on barangay watchmen.

In Caloocan City, police chief Benjardi Mantele said at least two policemen would be deployed in each of the more than 15 churches in the city for the nine consecutive masses from Dec. 16 to 24. *Leila Salaverria, Edson Tandoc Jr.*

## Cops stumble on suspected shabu lab in Parañaque

By Margaux Ortiz

WHAT was supposed to be a routine inspection following a reported robbery led to the discovery of a suspected shabu laboratory inside the Multinational Village in Parañaque City.

On Thursday night, Willy Cariño, caretaker of the three-story mansion on Block 7 Cairo St., sought police help after burglars allegedly broke into the house, which also served as a factory for making coconut wine or tuba.

According to Parañaque police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles, when police arrived there, they found expensive equipment which could be used for making shabu.

Residue of chemicals used in manufacturing the illegal drug was found in condensers, purifiers, container drums and distillers concealed in the mansion's basement.

Cariño has denied knowing the presence of the alleged shabu laboratory.

Estilles said they would question the mansion's owner, a certain Mr. Long, and a certain Jack Chun, who is reportedly renting the house for P60,000 a month.

# Political color highlights Avenida Rizal reopening

AVENIDA Rizal sports a fresh and shiny new look in time for its reopening yesterday by Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza, who is shown in inset with Fr. Jesus Malit of the Sta. Cruz Parish Church.

By Tarra Quismundo

PEOPLE clapped and cheered.

Among them were students, local government employees and politicians from all over the city of Manila.

They were a gracious audience to Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr., who delivered an impassioned speech at Plaza Lacson.

The scene was complete with placards and banners emulating the latest feat of the current city administration.

But no. Yesterday morning's event was not Atienza's "I'm-running-again-so-vote-for-me" rally, but the inauguration of the redeveloped portion of Avenida Rizal.

The mayor led a crowd, which police estimated at 5,000, in reopening the 500-meter section of the avenue which was closed in June to give way to pedestrianization.

Pedestrianization meant closing off the stretch of the main thoroughfare from the corner of C.M. Recto Avenue to Carriedo Street in Santa Cruz.

Its aim, according to Atienza, is to "revive" the once booming commercial center of the historic city.

During its heyday, Avenida Rizal hosted shops, restaurants and theaters that were the pride of their time.

It however began to deteriorate and decay with the construction of the light rail transit system. Earlier efforts to revive the avenue failed.

"It is just a matter of the government doing its job," the mayor said before the blessing of the project dubbed the "Avenida Rizal Pedestrian Walkway and Shopping Strip."

During his speech, Atienza enumerated his administration's other projects, which include the renovation of Plaza Miranda in Quiapo, the Roxas Boulevard Baywalk and Boardwalk and the Rajah Sulayman Park in Malate.

# Warrant out for Panlilio scion

A LAGUNA judge has issued an arrest warrant for the son of prominent jeweler Fe Panlilio, who allegedly robbed and killed two brothers in Calamba, Laguna last July.

No bail was recommended for Jose Ma. "Bong" Panlilio, a resident of 1686 Dasmariñas Ave., Dasmariñas Village, Makati.

The suspect reportedly took P250,000 from Albert Gutierrez and his brother, Ariel, before he allegedly killed them in Calamba last July 15.

The brothers and Panlilio drove to Laguna that day after the suspect convinced them to take his Hyundai Starez van.

Panlilio allegedly pawned the van to the brothers for P250,000, the victims' mother, Carmencita, told reporters in Camp Crame yesterday.

The brothers were later found dead inside their Mitsubishi Pajero vehicle. Albert was shot five times, while Ariel reportedly had eight gunshot wounds. *Christian Esguerra*

# A bitter blow for Sugar

SUGAR BENEDICTO

By Tina Santos

AS A CHILD star, Sugar Benedicto made people cry.

As an adult, it is the turn of Sugar, whose real name is Vanessa Benedicto Valenzuela, to shed tears.

The Quezon City Regional Trial Court yesterday sentenced the 25-year-old former actress to 17 years in prison for stealing the car of Noel Gomez, 41.

Judge Maria Theresa Yadao sentenced in absentia the once chubby and amiable mainstay of the "Ana Lisa" tele-series after the accused jumped bail and lost her chance to defend herself in court.

Court records showed that Gomez met Benedicto on April 28, 2002, at his house in Caloocan City because she wanted to buy his 1994 Toyota EX Saloon (TRW 704) worth P320,000.

The two took the car for a test drive after which Benedicto asked the owner for copies of the vehicle's papers.

When Gomez alighted to get the papers, Benedicto immediately sped off.

Fortunately, Gomez saw his friend Julian de Dios and they followed Benedicto aboard De Dios' car.

They chanced upon Benedictor coming from Greenmeadows Subdivision in Quezon City and pounced on her.

Benedicto cried while asking for forgiveness from Gomez, saying she tried to steal the car so she could sell it to finance the surgery of her sick 9-year-old son.

The car owner however still pressed charges.

Despite the conviction, the judge freed Benedicto from paying damages to Gomez.

# Raul Roco uncovered

## ON TARGET

*Ramon Tulfo*

I NORMALLY don't talk about problems in the home and other men's domestic failures in this column. I am not above such problems. If I point an accusing finger at another man when it comes to domestic problems, three fingers are pointing right back at me.

In short, I don't gossip in this space and in other forums because it's not manly.

But last Sunday I created a stir when at The Buzz, a popular TV show at ABS-CBN, I accused former senator and presidential aspirant Raul Roco of beating up his wife.

I had to take an exception to my strict policy of non-involvement in another man's personal failings on Raul Roco because he is running for the country's highest post. I subscribe to the saying that Caesar's wife should be above reproach, meaning the personal life of a man seeking a high public office should be scrutinized.

* * *

**Roco vehemently denied the serious charge. His wife, Sonia, was beside him when he made the denial.**

**Roco told the interviewer to ask his wife whether he made a punching bag out of her. As can be expected of a wife, Sonia backed the senator's statement.**

**But my friends who watched the TV show noticed that Ms Roco took several uncomfortable seconds to buttress Mr. Roco's denial.**

* * *

Sonia Roco asked how I could accuse her husband of beating her up when she didn't know me personally and vice versa.

I admit I don't personally know the Rocos. But I have talked to people who know them very well. I have talked to Roco's close relative who said that indeed the former senator and education secretary would beat up his wife during a spat.

Why are their statements believable? Because Roco has a violent temper. His temper is his No. 1 shortcoming.

* * *

**People who know the Rocos told me they take pity on Sonia because of the oppression she suffers from her husband.**

**A couple of years ago, Sonia ran away from home and went to Baguio after she was reportedly beaten black and blue by Raul.**

**As fate would have it, she was nearly killed when the hotel she checked into collapsed. People who saved her from the ruins of the hotel thought that the bruises she got from Roco's beating was caused by her being hit by debris**

What's the purpose of this exposé on Roco's very personal shortcoming?

In many speaking engagements, the former senator and education secretary always stresses the value of the family. He always says that the family should come first above everything else.

When he was still in the Senate, some women's groups conferred on Roco the title of "honorary woman" because of his espousal of women's rights in some of the laws he sponsored on the Senate floor.

But why couldn't Roco respect his wife's rights?

Isn't that hypocrisy of the highest order?

* * *

**Another presidential aspirant, Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, who is notorious for executing members of the underworld and reportedly even innocent people, has not been known for physically hurting his wife, Alice.**

**Neither does actor Fernando Poe Jr., who reportedly also has a violent temper when he's drunk. He allegedly beats up movie stuntmen when he's had a drink too many.**

**In fact, FPJ is a very doting husband to wife Susan Roces. I was told that when he and Susan would have a quarrel, Ronnie Poe was the first to blink.**

* * *

"*Alam mo, kuya, lumuluhod pa yan sa harap ni Ate Swanie* (Susan's nickname) *habang humihingi ng patawad* (You know he kneels before Swanie while asking forgiveness," said a movie scribe close to the Poes.

In treating the "weaker sex," Poe and Lacson have an edge over Roco. Lacson probably because he thinks he's one of them.

There's a saying among macho Filipinos: "*Ang babae ay hindi binubugbog, yan ay minamahal* (The woman is not to be beaten up, she is to be loved)."

## METROBRIEFS

### 2 killed in grenade blast

MIGUEL de Guzman and Jeffrey Pimentel on Sunday were killed when a grenade exploded in San Miguel, Bulacan. Police said Elpidio Ramos and his sons, Miguel, 15, Eduardo, 8 and Renato, 7, were also hurt in the blast. Police said one of the children found a grenade in Barangay Tartaro and began playing with it. The ordnance exploded when one of the children got a stone and started hitting it. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

### Indian priest dies in Laguna

JOSEPH Abraham, a Catholic priest from India, on Sunday reportedly drowned in a private resort in Barangay Pansol, Laguna. Senior Supt. Roberto Garcia, police chief of Calamba, Laguna, said a caretaker of Yahweh's Spring Resort found the body of Abraham, 36, in a swimming pool at around 5 a.m. Garcia said Abraham was with employees of the Far Eastern University Hospital, who went to the resort for a weekend religious retreat. Abraham was the chaplain of the Far Eastern University Hospital in Fairview. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

### Shot in the mouth

SECURITY guard Antonio Hechanova yesterday fractured his lower jaw and lost several teeth when a colleague, Romeo Mabuti, shot him in the mouth at their place of work. P01 Zal Mondoniedo said that the two were drinking at the CY Transo compound, Pier 18, Manila at around 1 a.m. when they had an argument. To settle the argument, Mabuti allegedly took out his service firearm, aimed at Hechanova, 30, and pulled the trigger. Mabuti fled after the shooting. Hechanova is reported to be in stable condition at the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Hospital. *Leila Salaverria*

### Raped by her text mate

QUEZON City Regional Trial Court Judge Monina Zenarosa yesterday sentenced to life Pacifico Santos, 42, for raping his 20-year-old textmate from Bicol. Zenarosa, of RTC Branch 76, also ordered Santos to pay the victim P50,000 in damages. Records showed that Santos, of Rodriguez, Rizal, sexually abused the victim, a Computer Science student from Camarines Sur, in a hotel in Cubao, Quezon City on Jan. 14. The two reportedly met in October 2002 through their cellular phones. *Tina Santos*

### Jealous woman stabs rival

ESTER dela Cruz, 38, on Sunday afternoon went to Barangay Tonsuya, Malabon City to visit her common-law husband. But when she got to the place of her mate, identified as a certain Jose, she came upon his alleged girlfriend, Mauricia Biagan, 37. During their confrontation, Biagan allegedly got a knife and stabbed Dela Cruz in the back, said PO2 Jorge Dela Cruz. After the attack, Biagan allegedly fled with her child by Jose. The victim was taken to the Pagamutang Bayan ng Malabon, police said. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

### Fire guts QC cotton factory

SOME P10 million worth of property went up in smoke in a fire that razed a cotton factory in Quezon City before dawn yesterday. Arson investigators said the blaze started at 12:10 a.m. at the building of Care Products Inc., located on P. Dela Cruz Street, Barangay San Bartlome, Novaliches. The fire reached Task Force Bravo alarm before it was put out at around 7 a.m. *Tina Santos*

TO: Edgar
TO: Gab
TO: Chito
TO: Vhong

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# Give a suavé present to everyone on your list.

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**Mr. Suave**
Parokya ni Edgar
Bigotilyo
RINGTONE: N1
POLYTONE: T1
WALLPAPER: C1
LYRICS: LY1

**Mandy**
Westlife
Turnaround
RINGTONE: N2
POLYTONE: T2
WALLPAPER: C2
LYRICS: LY2

**Shut Up**
Black Eyed Peas
Bephunk
RINGTONE: N3
POLYTONE: T3
WALLPAPER: C3
LYRICS: LY3

**You Raise Me Up**
Josh Groban
Closer
RINGTONE: N4
POLYTONE: T4
WALLPAPER: C4
LYRICS: LY4

**Tell Me**
Ariel Rivera
In My Life
RINGTONE: N5
POLYTONE: T5
WALLPAPER: C5
LYRICS: LY5

**Fighting Temptations**
Beyonce, Mc Lyte, Missy Elliot
Fighting Temptations OST
RINGTONE: N6
POLYTONE: T6
WALLPAPER: FREE*
LYRICS: LY6

**Bakit Pa Ba?**
Jay R
Game Face
RINGTONE: N7
POLYTONE: T7
WALLPAPER: C6
LYRICS: LY7

**From The Inside**
Linkin Park
Meteora
RINGTONE: N8
POLYTONE: T8
WALLPAPER: C7
LYRICS: LY8

**Holidae In**
Chingy
Jackpot
RINGTONE: N9
POLYTONE: T9
WALLPAPER: C8
LYRICS: LY9

**If You Come To Me**
Atomic Kitten
Ladies Night
RINGTONE: N10
POLYTONE: T10
WALLPAPER: C9
LYRICS: LY10

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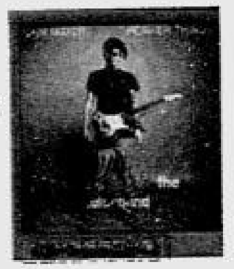

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| Merry Christmas Darling | You Were There |
| | 25 Minutes |
| | More Than Words |

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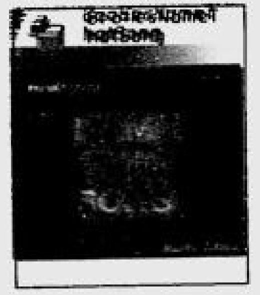

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SPORTS

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Compiled by L. Mangulat

**BASKETBALL:** NBA - Grizzlies vs Spurs; 9:30 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.); Solar Sports—Vastly-improved Memphis faces a tough challenge when it tangles with defending champion San Antonio.

NBA Greatest Games - Bulls vs Jazz, Game 1, 1998 Finals; 12 noon; Solar Sports—Utah gets a head start on Chicago as it steals the first game in of their best-of-seven series.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

# No rest for tracksters

## *Go's Army seeks Olympic berths*

**By Marc Anthony Reyes**

THERE will be no luxury of a lull for the victorious mainstays of the national track and field squad.

The tracksters, the Philippines' most productive source of gold medals in the just-ended 22nd Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam are set to plunge into action again, with an eye on clinching slots in next year's Athens Olympics.

Athletics chief Go Teng Kok yesterday said the athletes would soon go into deep training to try to meet the stringent criteria for Olympic participation.

The president of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association also said he was not satisfied with the SEAG performance of his wards, even though the Philippines wound up second to Thailand in athletics.

The Thais plucked 13 golds, five more than the Filipinos' harvest. Vietnam and Malaysia rode on surprise victories in the last two days of the competitions to match RP's golden haul.

Go earlier predicted the tracksters would win as many as 12 golds. But a disastrous penultimate day of competition saw four golds—which the heavily favored Filipino bets were expected to put away—slip off their grasp in the din of the Vietnamese offensive in Hanoi's main stadium.

**HOME ARE THE HEROES: Members of the Philippine delegation to the 22nd SEAG show off their medals after jetting in from Vietnam Sunday night.** ROGER MARGALLO

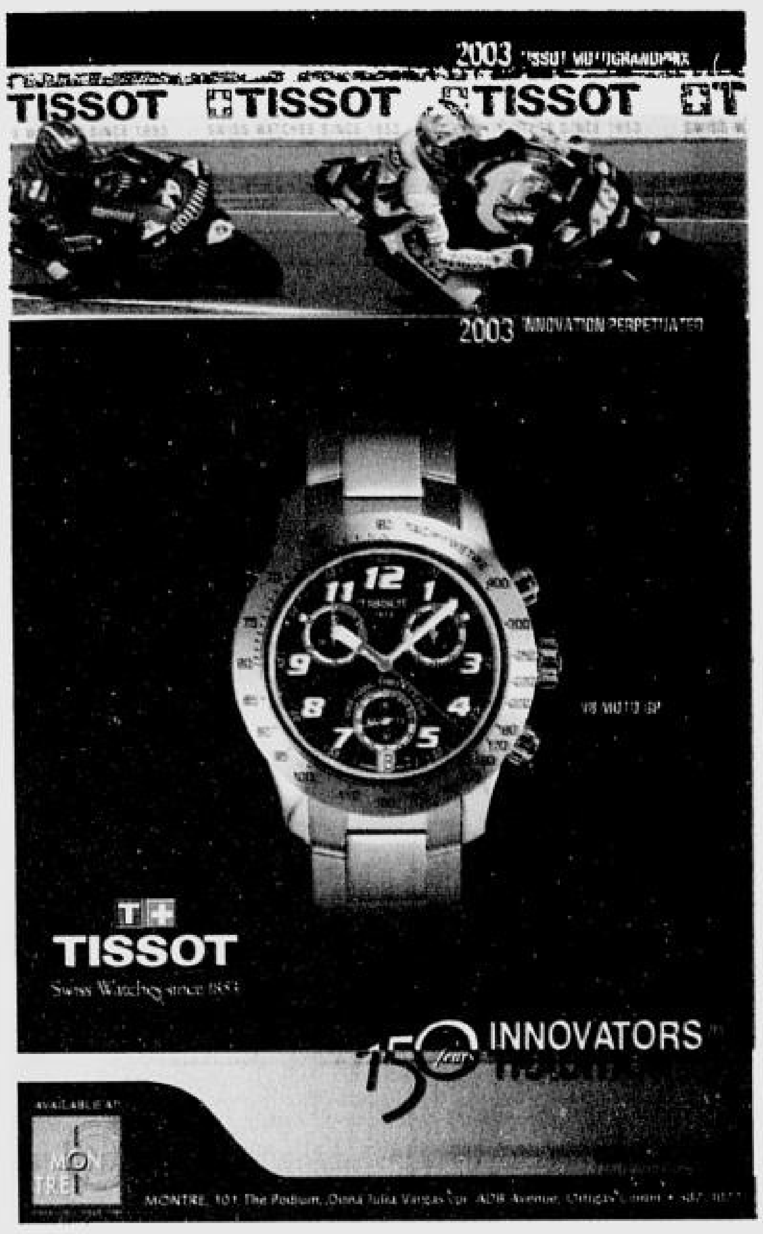
Defending decathlon champion Fidel Gallenero yielded his title, John Lozada and Eduardo Buenavista surrendered the gold in the 800 meters and 5,000m, respectively, and the fancied 4x400 squad got pipped by the unheralded Thais.

Still, Go said factors beyond their control, including training problems, affected the athletes' performance.

"There were many things that hindered us from reaching our target," he said.

All told, wushu came next to athletics in gold-medal production with six, followed by taekwondo with five and fencing with four.

# TAULAVA IS MVP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# Tams, Eagles eye title playoff

**GAMES TODAY**
*(Rizal Coliseum)*
2:30 p.m.—St. Francis vs FEU
4:30 p.m.—Ateneo vs SSC

REIGNING UAAP champion Far Eastern and runner-up Ateneo take on separate rivals today in the semifinals of the Champions' League basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

The Tamaraws, conquerors of NCAA titlist Letran Knights and CUSA champ Las Piñas College in the earlier rounds, collide with NCRAA and UCAA kings St. Francis of Assisi at 2:30 p.m.

Hoping to end the year with a bang, the Eagles match up with NCAA runners-up San Sebastian College Stags in the 4:30 p.m. second game.

The Tamaraws are expected to encounter stiff resistance from the Doves, who are led by RP team mainstays Ranidel de Ocampo and Ervin Sotto.

"St. Francis is a strong team and I'm aware that they are aching for revenge," said FEU coach Koy Banal.

The Tamaraws stalled the Doves in the quarterfinals of last year's tournament.

After that loss, however, the Doves haven't tasted a defeat, completing a 16-game sweep of the NCRAA and beating all pretenders in the UCAA for the second straight season.

Both Ateneo and SSC failed to defend the crown in their respective leagues despite starting the season as heavy favorites.

The Eagles are slight favorites to prevail with Nationals Rich Alvarez and Wesley Gonzales back in the fold.

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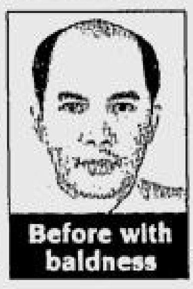

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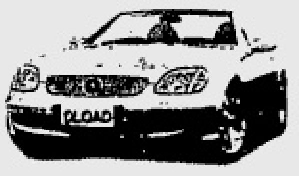

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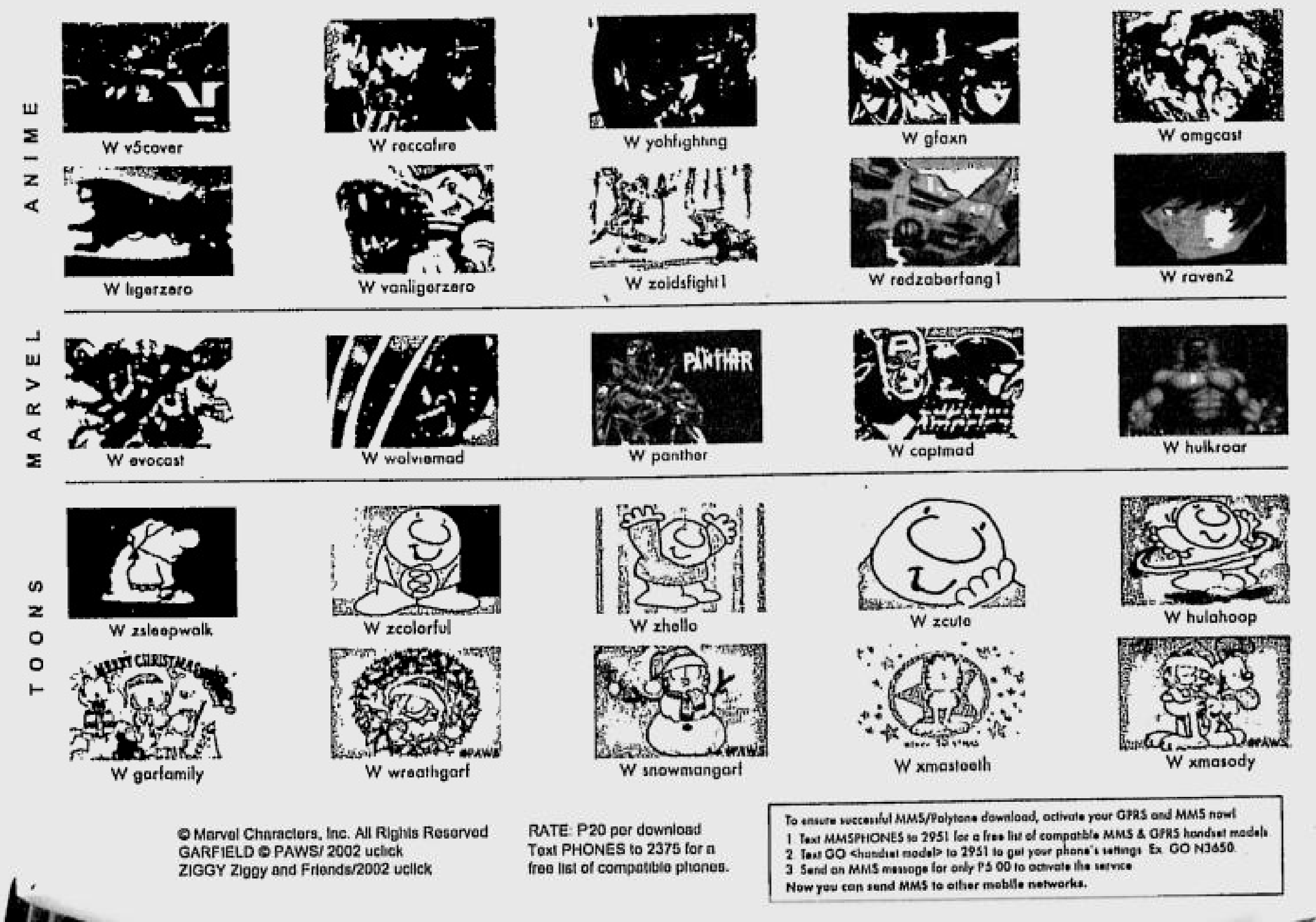

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LEO AWARDS

# Asi is PBA's best for 2003

ASI Taulava rode a wave of votes from mediamen and fellow players to become the PBA's 2003 Most Valuable Player, the highest honor given out in last night's Leo Awards at the Music Museum in Greenhills, San Juan.

The 6-foot-9 Talk 'N Text slotman finished a close second to Coca-Cola forward Rudy Hatfield in the statistical race but was swept into the league's top honor by votes from scribes, players and the four-man MVP committee.

Taulava was on 34 of the 42 votes cast by mediamen, got half of the 32 votes from players and a sweep of the four votes from the MVP committee to become the first foreign-born player to win the award since Ricardo Brown in 1985.

Together with the 1,158 points Taulava got from statistics, he garnered 8845 points to win over Hatfield (2,752), Coke's Jeffrey Cariaso (2,043) and Rafi Reavis (1,081), TNT teammate Jimmy Alapag (920) and Alaska's Ali Peek (760).

Sharing the spotlight with Taulava in the star-studded affair dubbed "Blitz Meets Glitz" was founding commissioner Leo Prieto, who became the first recipient of the Gawad Emerson Coseteng award.

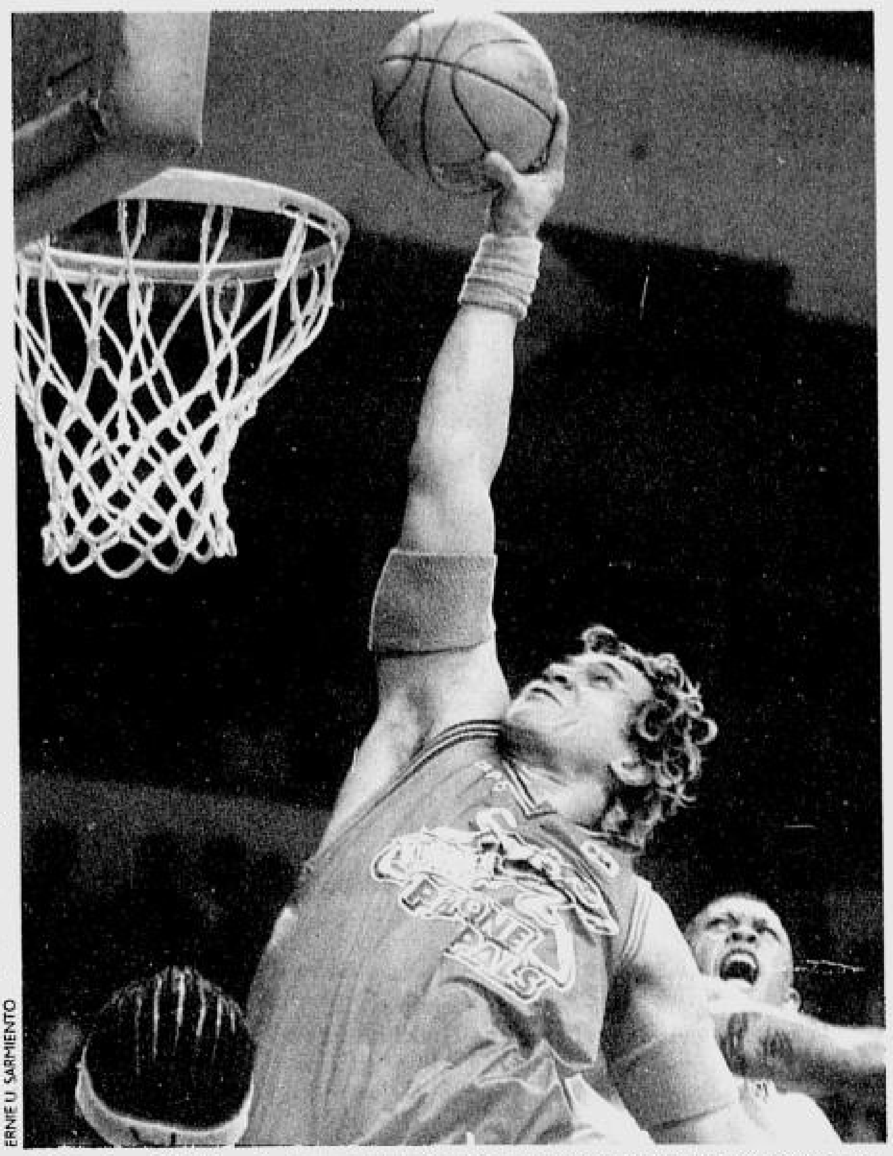
Taulava also won spots in the Mythical first team and the All-Defensive team selections to cap off a career year that saw him lead the Phone Pals to their first conference championship in the All Filipino Cup.

Alapag also romped off with his share of awards, booking a Mythical first team berth as well as the Rookie of the Year plum which he won over Alaska's Mike Cortez.

Joining Taulava, who also earned the distinction as "Darling of the Media," and Alapag in the Mythical first team were Cariaso, Hatfield and Sta. Lucia Realty's Dennis Espino.

In the closest race of the evening, Reavis beat Shell forward Anthony dela Cruz by 57 points, 1,467-1,410, for the Most Improved Player plum.

SMB's Joey Mente got the Mr Energy award.


ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

ASI Taulava is first foreign-born player after Ricardo Brown in 1985 to win MVP plum.

# Shineway, Lhuillier seal title clash

CEBU CITY—Defending champion Shineway-Compak-Ozamiz City and archrival M. Lhuillier Kwarta Padala-Cebu downed separate opponents from the North yesterday at the New Cebu City Coliseum to seal a championship showdown in the Panasonic-National Basketball League (NBL) Regional Cup.

Shineway-Compak-Ozamiz City ousted the Ilocos Sur Snipers, 94-87, while M. Lhuillier-Kwarta Padala-Cebu hang tough to outlast Spring Cooking Oil-San Pablo, 72-68.

Veteran bruiser Alwyn Flores and skipper Edgard Echavez delivered double-double outputs for the Ozamiz crew to seal the sudden-death title clash with M. Lhuillier-Kwarta Padala today at 4:30 p.m.

Ilocos Sur and Spring Cooking Oil-San Pablo duel for third at 2 p.m.

**Scores:**

**First Game:**

**COMPAK-SHINEWAY 94**—Flores 23, Echavez 23, Booker 14, Guerrero 12, L. Rodriguez 4, Libatog 4, De Jesus, Fenaren 3, Guiyab 3, Alminario 2, Sampilo 2, Cabrera 0, Cabigkis 0.

**ILOCOS SUR SNIPERS 87**—Barbosa 23, An Reyes 17, Agapito 15, Evans 14, Ferreria 13, Butel 3, Machica 2, Gumpenberger 0, Sifona 0.

Quarters: 29-19, 45-46, 72-61, 94-87.

**Second Game:**

**M. LHUILLIER 72**—Enriquez 17, Dacla 17, Aying 14, Lumantas 9, Smith 5, Ocaneda 4, Dela Rosa 2, Al Reyes 2, Laygo 2, Canoneo 0.

**SPRING COOKING OIL 68**—Reyes 16, Crisostomo 15, Tolentino 10, Manuel 6, Menor 5, Limbo 4, Habelito 4, Gumatay 3, Mendoza 3, Taguines 2, Maghirang 0.

Quarters: 22-15, 33-30, 59-50, 72-68.

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| Sunkist-UST | 4 | 4 |
| ICTSI | 2 | 6 |
| VIVA-FEU | 1 | 6 |

# Montaña five picked to repeat over Blustar

MONTAÑA Pawnshop resumes its semifinal drive against Blustar Detergent while ICTSI-La Salle fights for dear life today as action in the PBL Platinum Cup shifts to high gear after an 11-day break.

Out to improve on their fourth-place finish in the Sunkist-Unity Cup, the Jewels will be gunning for their fifth win in seven starts against the Detergent Kings, who are also seeking to boost their semis bid.

Gametime is set at 4 p.m. at the Letran gym, with the Jewels eyeing to exact revenge. The Detergent Kings, starring Jenkins Mesina, beat the Jewels, 75-65, the last time the two teams met.

Mesina exploded for 25 points in that win, 10 of them in the first quarter where the Detergent Kings surprised the Jewels with a cascade of baskets.

The Detergent Kings are tied with Fash Liquid Detergent for third place with similar 4-3 win-loss cards.

Mesina is again expected to lead the assault for the Detergent Kings, along with Ismael Juinio, Edrick Ferrer and bull-strong Randy Lopez. Montaña needs more firepower from Gary David and Jondan Salvador in the absence of Al Magpayo, Marlon Basco and Michael Manigo who are sidelined with various injuries.

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# Vietnam example

**SPECTATOR**

*Al S. Mendoza*

SINCE 1995, the country that hosted the SEA Games virtually won the overall crown. It's getting to be a trend?

You bet.

Thailand, the inaugural champion 44 years ago, hosted it in Chiang Mai in 1995 and ran away with the crown. Jakarta was the venue in 1997 and Indonesia won its ninth title—its last though since the biennial meet was born in 1959.

Brunei could not win when it hosted it in 1999 and that was understandable. Although oil-rich and could have easily won the crown if only it wanted to, what with even a fraction of its billions of dollars in reserve as sports budget for training, Brunei is somewhat restricted by Moslem laws so that it could not field in swimmers as women in swim suits are still taboo to their religion.

Thailand won in 1999 because Indonesia, a perennial power, was still reeling from the economic meltdown caused by a violent political turmoil that hit it after the 1997 SEA Games.

In 2001, Malaysia won its first crown when Kuala Lumpur was the host. The only other country other than Indonesia and Thailand to win was Myanmar when it was still known as Burma—in 1961 and 1969.

For the record, Indonesia had streaks of four crowns in 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983 and 1987, 1989, 1991 and 1993. It yielded the crown to Thailand in 1995 before regaining it 1997 to tie Thailand for the most number of titles with nine apiece.

Vietnam, hosting it for the first time, won this year's SEA Games with an astonishing performance that suddenly thrust the once war-torn country to the pedestal of sporting power in the region.

It is said that Vietnam's resurgence began when it constructed a stadium worth $100 million. The huge amount was unbelievable, indeed, considering the destruction the Americans had inflicted on the Vietnamese economy during the Vietnam War, another "wrong war" that America had done after the last world war. An incalculable amount of damage to property—not to mention the loss of millions of lives—had put the country in ruins which pundits then said would take decades to rebuild.

Amazingly, it took no less than 25 years to put Vietnam back on its feet. At least, sportswise that is.

If the reports are true, Vietnam's rise to sporting greatness can be attributed to the country's move to prioritize athletic programs by sending prospective medalists to train overseas. Sent on training missions to Austria, China, Europe and America were athletes with strong potentials for gold medals. The six-year program beginning with the 1997 Games reaped fruits this year. Many of their gold medalists this year were graduates of the 2001 SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur.

It helps, of course, that some of the gold-rich events this year were mostly the province of Vietnamese athletes. Meaning, many of the 11 participating nations did not have strong material to challenge the Vietnamese in events handpicked by the host. As I keep saying here, the host country in the SEA Games has the option to either accept or refuse an event in the calendar. The only disciplines the host cannot refuse are swimming and athletics, which are mandated as must-events by the International Olympic Committee.

But still and all, you have to give credit to Vietnam. Its runaway victory reflects its decisiveness, if not determination, to make a statement in the region: Vietnam, long the whipping boy, is now a power to contend with.

May its example rub on us.

- *Al S. Mendoza will be away from Dec. 17 to 22. He will resume his column on Tuesday, Dec. 23.*

**WINNERS' GALLERY: X Games 2002 gold medalist Takeshi Yasutoko of Japan (in red helmet, second from left) with the top three placers in both the junior and main categories in inline skating, bicycle stunt, bicycle flatland and skateboard events of the recent Philippine leg of the Asian X Games Qualifier held at the Filinvest Corporate City. With Yasutoko is John Hechanova (extreme left), advertising manager of sponsor Toyota Motor Philippines. The top finishers will represent the country in the Asian X Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia next February.**

## SPORTSWATCH

**MEMBERS of the Alabang Football School with their coach after copping the 7-year-old division in the recent 8th Alaska Football Cup at the Alabang Country Club fields. AFS won over Springdale Cebu (second) and Brent Mamplasan (third) in the age-group event that lured close to 2,700 participants from around the country.**

### Air Force booters forge sudden death

AIR Force extended the Globe Super Cup football tournament another day after the airmen downed Navy, 1-0, at the Nomads pitch in Merville, Parañaque, last Sunday. The rubber match of the championship series will be played this Thursday at the same venue. Midfielder Jez Tonog got a deflection in the 65th-minute atop the penalty box to score the winning goal. Air Force coach Edwin Cabalida praised goalkeeper Joeme Tolosa for keeping the Navymen at bay.

### Marcelo stamps class in Palayan moto challenge

TEAM Castrol-Kawasaki rider Jimboy Marcelo emerged as the most prolific rider in the local enduro class by scoring three podium finishes in the recent 3rd Motocross Challenge 2003 in Palayan City, Nueva Ecija. The 15-year-old Marcelo, last year's National Mini Champion rider, rode his Kawasaki KMX-125R to second-place finishes in the Power Enduro and Dual-Sport classes and to third place in the Beginners Production category. His Castrol Motocross Racing team, which his father manages, ruled six of the eight categories contested. Only motocross great Jovie Saulog snatched the two events disputed in the Palayan races.

### Ruiz rules Christmas exec chess

RYAN Ruiz topped the Open category while Rey Reyes ruled the Under-2000 division of the Christmas executive Chess Kings (Check) tournament held recently at the CNK Donuts in Makati City. "This is a tremendous victory. I feel great. I am back," said Ruiz, a physical therapist at Rehabcare Makati. He won an elegantly crafted trophy and a Fide digital chess clock worth US$100. Reyes, meanwhile, received a chess kit and the Belgosa medal of chess excellence. Ruiz, a winner of the Serenity section of the Peace 2001 series, scored 4.5 points in the one-day, five-round event organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia and sponsored by Belgosa Media Systems. Dentist Jenny Mayor and Romulo Silvestre tied for second place with 4 points each, while Dennis San Juan and Louie Polistico shared fourth with 3.5 apiece. Verth Alora and Sam Arellano came next with 3 each.

### BM stagfights under way at Roligon

VETERAN cockers are seeing action in the BM 4-Cock Derby at Roligon Mega Cockpit beginning at 7 p.m. today. Invited by derby host Bonjing Catajan and Monching Adriano are cockfight luminaries Raymond Velayo, William Go, Carding Ng, JR Cadia, Butchoy Olano, Alfie Sy, Val Adriano, Blandy Tolentino, Biboy Enriquez, Arnel Pimentel, Patrick Antonio, the Madlambayan Brothers, Joel Fernando, among others. All entries must be submitted before 2 p.m. today. For inquiries, call 833-2275 and 833-1638. Slated on Dec. 18 is the Harvest Time 4-Cock Derby, with Harvest Time and Flower Group as hosts. The Cash Premyo 2-Cock Ulutan, which offers a cash pot of P250,000 (entry fee, P2,200) follows on Dec. 19. Cockers from the provinces are expected to comprise majority of entries in the Buenas Dias 4-Cock Derby hosted by James Villaflor and Dr. Jovy, on Dec. 20.

### Top cockers vying in La Loma derby

MORE than 100 fights spice up the championship clash in La Loma Cockpit's annual 4-cock derby which kicks off today at 3 p.m. Host is well-known promoter Bobot Yu. Seeing action are cockfighting heavyweights Danny Pe, Peter Acuña, Dr. Allan Hernandez, Jerry Ang, Dante Samson, Erning Barcelona, Tony Lasala, Danny Ty, lawyer Romero Yu, Bobby Vinluan, Arman Santos, Biboy Enriquez, John Capinpin, Romy Vicente, Mel Lim, Joey de los Santos, Benjie Lim, Mario dela Cuesta, Eric Lu, Tony Tan, Pepito Ngo, Teddy Fernandez, Fabian Cua, basketball star Johnny Abarrientos, William Go, Butchoy Olano, John Lim, Attorney Loyola, Bong Salazar, Tino Yao, Ricky Valencia, councilor Melendrez, Sonny Lagon, Eric dela Rosa, William Llamado and Meder Datu. For an entry fee of P11,000, the guaranteed prize at stake is at least P300,000, said Yu. The winning handler and gaffer get P30,000 and P20,000, respectively. For inquiries, call 740-7398, 740-2136 and 740-7392.

**FISHING CLINIC: Youngsters display their catch during the recent sportsfishing clinic conducted by the Manila Anglers' Club at the Hilltop Resort in Cavinti, Laguna. The club's outreach program, funded by Pagcor, was intended to bring youngsters closer to nature through sportsfishing. Instructors included Mark Rosales, Nelson Umali, Tom Santos, Ed Tecson, Jerry ragasa and Butch Nava.**

# Eastridge next stop of Samsung tour

AFTER visiting five of the most popular golfing destinations around the country, the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour returns to Metro Manila with Eastridge Golf Club in Binangonan, Rizal, playing host to the next leg on Thursday and Friday.

Focus of the 36-hole battle is the search for the next grand finals qualifier in the championship division.

Two of the country's finest amateur shotmakers, Jerome Delariarte and Juvic Pagunsan, have already earned berths in the finals.

Jay Bayron and reigning Eastridge club champion Chino Raymundo as well as national pro-am titlist JR Tanpinoco head the list of those eyeing to join Delariarte and Pagunsan in the tournament of champions set next March at Mt. Malarayat in Batangas.

The Samsung Tour kicked off at Forest Hills before moving on to the Apo Golf and Country Club in Davao, Pueblo del Oro in Cagayan de Oro, Cebu Country Club, Negros Occidental Golf and Country Club in Bacolod and the Camp John Hay course in Baguio.

The penultimate stop of the Samsung Tour eliminations is co-sponsored by Mario's Restaurant, Wilson, Gatorade, Tokyo Tokyo, Microtel, Custom Clubmakers, Rogin-E and Dunlop Golf with radio stations Killer-Bee, Citylite 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite as official media partners.

For inquiries, call the organizing Professional Sports Management Group Inc. (PSMG) at 635-0010 (look for Vangie). Registration is on a first-come first-served basis.

# Love defeats Woods by 2

THOUSAND OAKS, California—Davis Love III walked away with the largest check of his career. Tiger Woods made sure he earned every penny.

Love made a 45-foot birdie putt on the 16th hole to finally breathe easy Sunday at the Target World Challenge, closing with an even-par 72 for a two-shot victory over Woods.

But Woods made him sweat on a chilly, mostly rainy day at Sherwood Country Club.

Trailing by 10 shots with 10 holes to play, Woods unleashed six birdies in seven holes and closed the deficit to a single shot.

He finished with two pars for a 65, then went to the clubhouse to see where it would leave him. Within minutes, Woods was dressed in blue jeans and sneakers.

He watched from the grill room as Love spun his wedge back 45 feet from the cup, below a ridge on the par-5 16th, then rolled it in for birdie and a two-shot margin with two holes to play.

Love clinched it with a bunker shot to three feet for par on No. 18. He finished at 11-under 277 and won $1.2 million from the $5 million purse.

"When he birdied five holes in a row, I knew the game was on," Love said. "And I had to play hard."

His largest paycheck had been $1.17 million at The Players Championship, one of his four PGA Tour victories this year.

This one doesn't count in the record books, but it still was plenty meaningful.

Love won against a world-class field that featured the top 12 players available from the world ranking and four sponsor's exemptions—two of them major champions.

He became the first repeat winner of the Target World Challenge since Woods created it five years ago. Love also won in 2000, the first year it was at Sherwood. *AP*

**IN YOUR FACE**

**Real Madrid's Zinedine Zidane (left) kicks Deportivo de la Coruna's Sergio in the face during their Spanish League match at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on Sunday. Real Madrid won, 2-1.** AFP

# Tejada to Orioles for $72M

NEW ORLEANS—The Baltimore Orioles made a big splash Sunday, signing former American League Most Valuable Player Miguel Tejada to a $72 million, six-year contract and vowing they were just starting to warm up at the winter meetings.

After finding the first stellar successor to Cal Ripken at shortstop, the Orioles immediately turned their attention back to three other top targets: Vladimir Guerrero, Ivan Rodriguez and Javy Lopez.

"This is the first part of what we're trying to accomplish this offseason, with getting bats in the middle of the lineup," Orioles vice president Jim Beattie said. *AP*

## *Heat cool off Raptors*

TORONTO—Dwayne Wade hit the game-winning jumper with 28 seconds left and had 23 points to lead the Miami Heat to their third straight victory, 90-89, over the Toronto Raptors in the NBA on Sunday.

Wade also blocked a jumper attempt by Vince Carter with one minute left in the fourth quarter to help preserve the win.

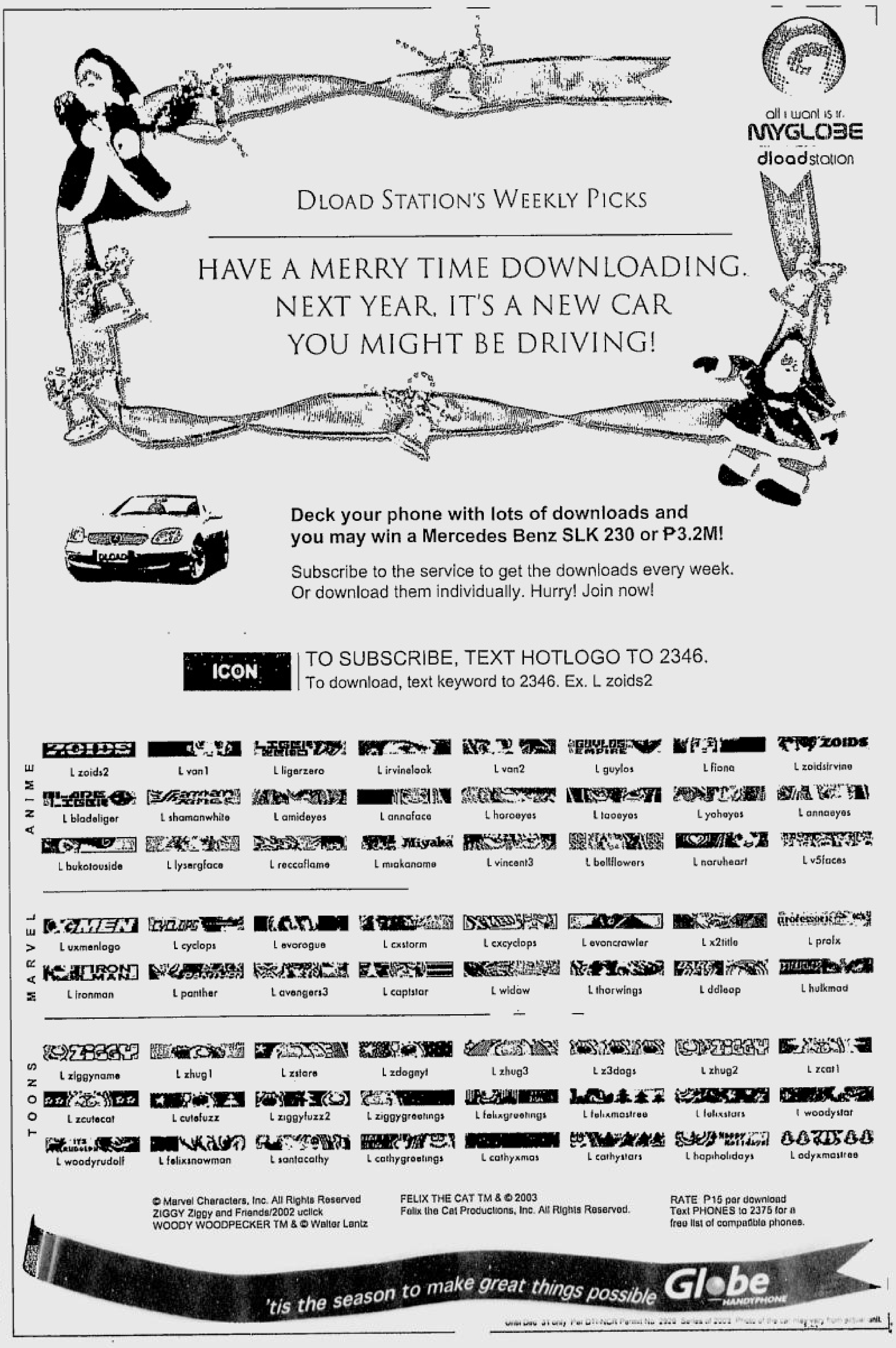
Miami (8-5) improved to 3-0 since Caron Butler returned to the lineup, while winning on the road for just the second time in 11 games this season.

Brian Grant added 19 points and 13 rebounds for the Heat, while Lamar Odom had 17 points and 16 rebounds.

The Raptors won five straight games after making their big trade with the Chicago Bulls on December 1, but have now lost two straight after losing 114-111 at Boston Friday night.

**Complete results:**

Miami 90, Toronto 89; Seattle 108, Milwaukee 102; Utah 94, Philadelphia 86; New York 89, Washington 87; Sacramento 107, Phoenix 102. *Reuters*



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L zstare
L zdognyt
L zhug3
L z3dogs
L zhug2
L zcat1
L zcutecat
L cutefuzz
L ziggyfuzz2
L ziggygreetings
L felixgreetings
L felixmastree
L felixstars
L woodystar
L woodyrudolf
L felixsnowman
L santacathy
L cathygreetings
L cathyxmas
L cathystars
L hapiholidays
L odyxmastree

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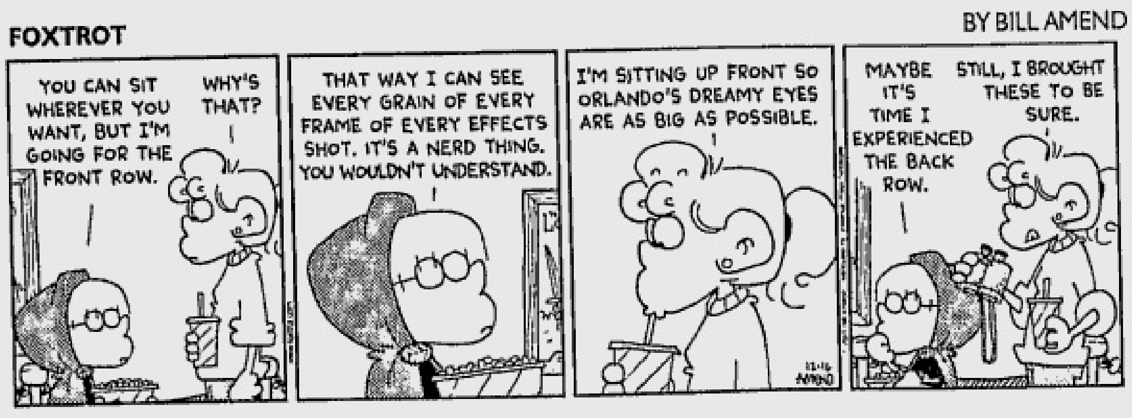
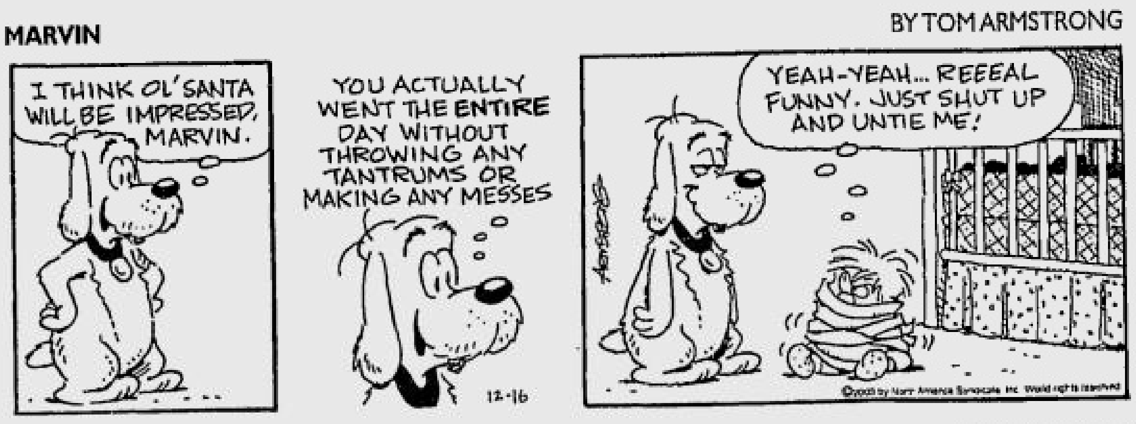
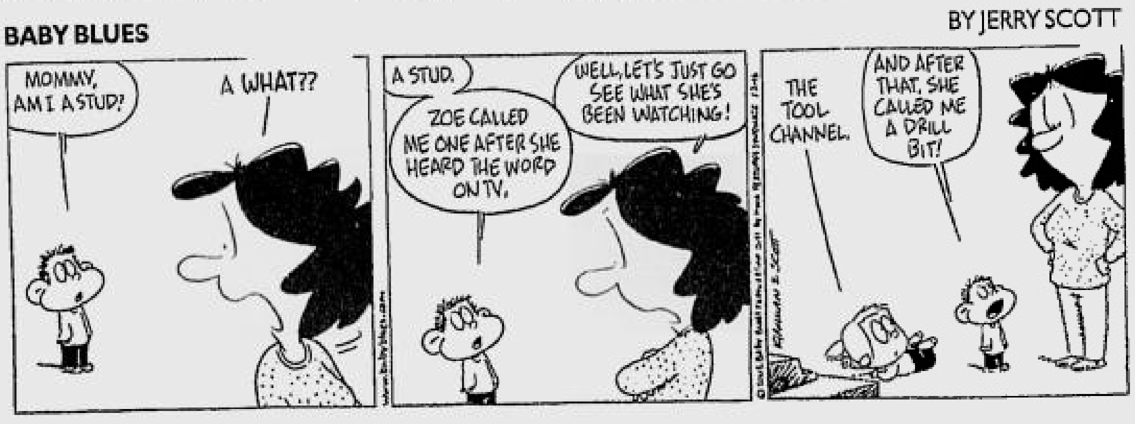
### FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


YOU CAN SIT WHEREVER YOU WANT, BUT I'M GOING FOR THE FRONT ROW.
WHY'S THAT?
THAT WAY I CAN SEE EVERY GRAIN OF EVERY FRAME OF EVERY EFFECTS SHOT. IT'S A NERD THING. YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
I'M SITTING UP FRONT SO ORLANDO'S DREAMY EYES ARE AS BIG AS POSSIBLE.
MAYBE IT'S TIME I EXPERIENCED THE BACK ROW.
STILL, I BROUGHT THESE TO BE SURE.
12-16 AMEND

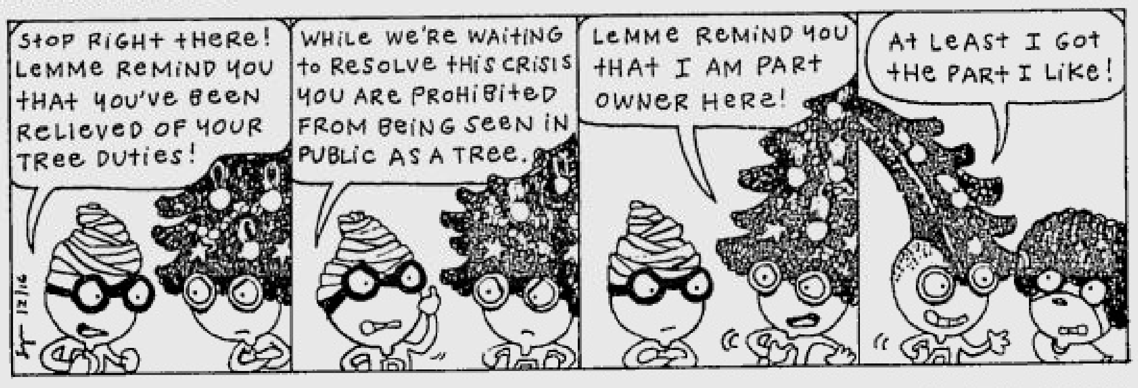
### MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I THINK OL' SANTA WILL BE IMPRESSED, MARVIN.
YOU ACTUALLY WENT THE ENTIRE DAY WITHOUT THROWING ANY TANTRUMS OR MAKING ANY MESSES
YEAH-YEAH... REEEAL FUNNY. JUST SHUT UP AND UNTIE ME!
12-16

### BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


MOMMY, AM I A STUD?
A WHAT??
A STUD.
ZOE CALLED ME ONE AFTER SHE HEARD THE WORD ON TV.
WELL, LET'S JUST GO SEE WHAT SHE'S BEEN WATCHING!
THE TOOL CHANNEL.
AND AFTER THAT, SHE CALLED ME A DRILL BIT!

### ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Stop right there! Lemme remind you that you've been relieved of your tree duties!
While we're waiting to resolve this crisis you are prohibited from being seen in public as a tree.
Lemme remind you that I am part owner here!
At least I got the part I like!
12/16

## HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

**YOU BORN TODAY:** You have a refined mind and a wonderful imagination. You easily visualize things. You have a sensitive artistic temperament, and you need to live with people who understand you. You also need solitude and privacy in which to create. Seek solitude this year to learn and study.
**Birthdate of:** Steven Bochco, producer; Benjamin Bratt, actor; Jane Austen, writer.

**ARIES (March 21 to April 19):** Your life starts to get very busy now. That's excellent. You have the chance to show the world what you can really do.

**TAURUS (April 20 to May 20):** Be patient with people for the next few weeks. You might feel irritated or unworthy. Ignore these feelings. They have no basis in reality.

**GEMINI (May 21 to June 20):** Now is the time to formulate goals for the future. Talk to others about your objectives. Find people who are willing to work with you, or a explore physical sports and organizations with others.

**CANCER (June 21 to July 22):** Your ambition to achieve is very strong now! It will stay this way for the next few weeks. (Try to work independently as much as you can.)

**LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22):** You identify very strongly now with your ideas and your beliefs. However, you are not what you believe. You are you. (You can defend your beliefs, but they might change in the future.)

**VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22):** Be patient with partners now because disagreements about shared property and financial arrangements are likely. Or you might disagree about how to spend a limited amount of money. (Tolerance is the key to keeping the peace.)

**LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22):** You might feel conflict with partners in the next few weeks. More likely you feel misunderstood by others. However, you could be the one who is building a wall!

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21):** You're definitely willing to work very hard now to get things done. Go right ahead, because you will get considerable pride from your efforts now.

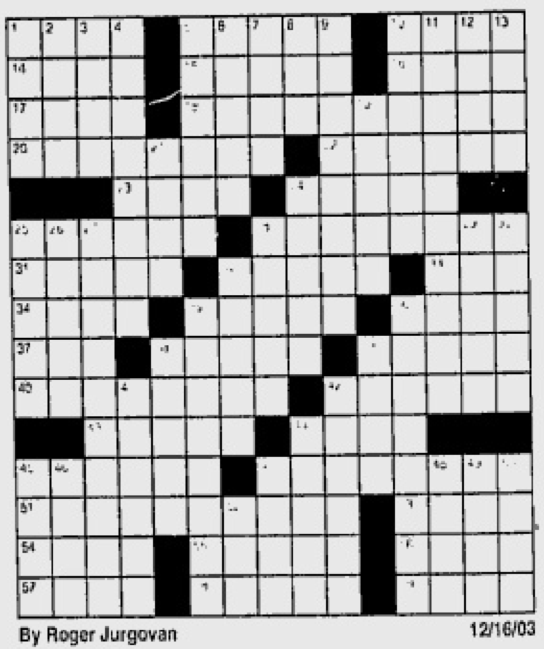
**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21):** Your romantic impulses are certainly turned on now! Old relationships will perk up; new romance can definitely arrive. You're playful and eager for pleasure.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19):** Great activity is probably starting to take place where you live now. This could be due to renovations, decorating, residential moves or visitors. (Get as much done as you can.)

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18):** The tempo of your daily life is starting to accelerate. Short trips, conversations with neighbors and siblings, plus increased writing, studying and reading add to your busy load.

**PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20):** You're willing to use your possessions in a new and inventive way now. You see that many things you own can be put to a better or different use.

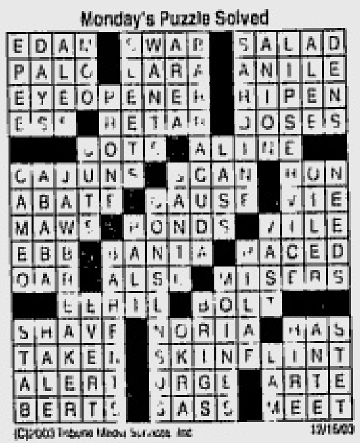
## DAILY CROSSWORD


By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD
12/16/03

ACROSS
1 Compact storage device
5 Second from the sun
10 PIN takers
14 Unemployed
15 Ammonia derivative
16 Verve
17 Cutlet meat
18 Oneness
20 Harshness
22 Century plants
23 Old Norse character
24 Varnish ingredient
25 Flip side of prone
28 Yard hanging
31 H.S. junior's exams
32 Enough, Ginal
33 T-shirt size
34 Ethereal
35 Chief Justice in Dred Scott case
36 Bob the TV handyman
37 Furrow
38 Arnaz and Arnaz, Jr.
39 Fare
40 Contagious outbreak
42 Heavy particle
43 Mann or McPherson
44 Blood fluids
45 Sickly lack of color
47 Fierceness
51 Pleasantness
53 Thought
54 Feminist Lucretia
55 Of sound quality
56 Abound
57 Terrier type
58 Oxen couplers
59 Yearnings

DOWN
1 Operatic prima donna
2 Middle of the month
3 Smack
4 Swiftness
5 Product that "gets the red out"
6 Act the ham
7 Nickname for Frasier's brother?
8 Beginning to form?
9 Brotherliness
10 Westmoreland Vietnam successor
11 Shallowness
12 Tiny arachnid
13 Oriental sauces
19 Booster rocket
21 Flees
24 Palliates
25 Trunk tire
26 Consume
27 Fondness
28 Frenzied
29 Ice house?
30 Country singer Rimes
32 Count of jazz
35 Brashness
36 Truthfulness
38 Check out of the British army
39 Kicker Yepremian
41 Make wider
42 Emerald and aquamarine
44 Still bristles
45 Dawber and Tillis
46 Wild way to run
47 Informer
48 __ fixe
49 Young adult
50 Thanksgiving veggies
52 London lav.

Monday's Puzzle Solved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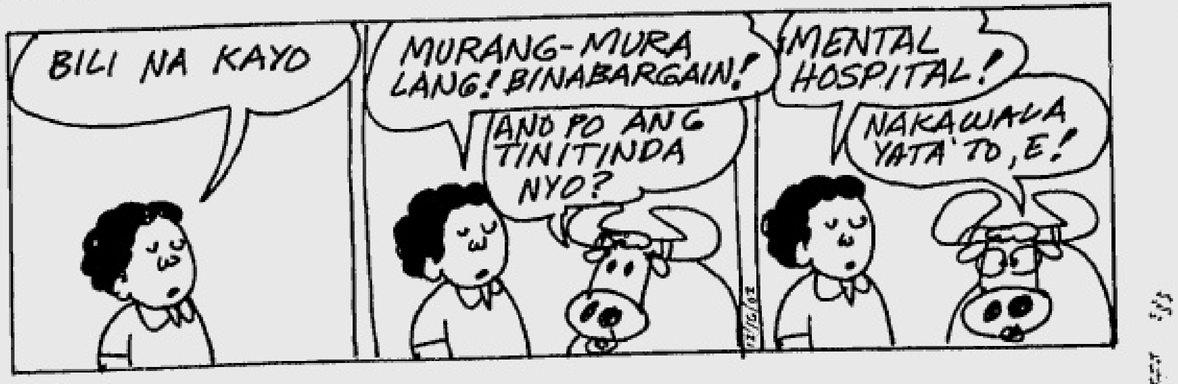
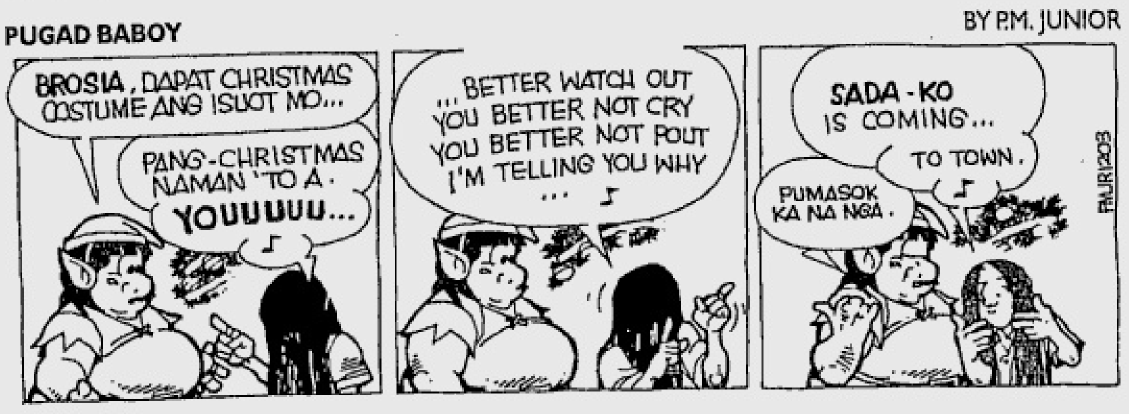
12/15/03

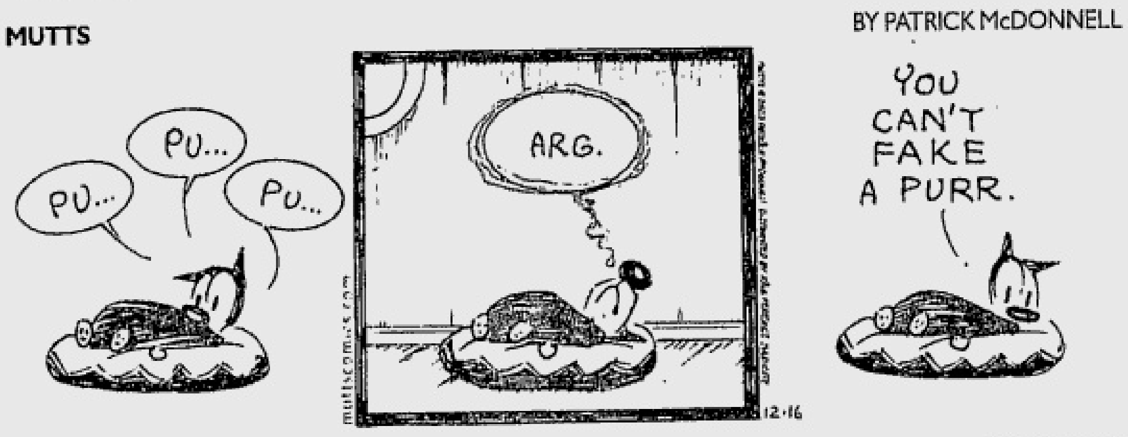
### A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


BILI NA KAYO
MURANG-MURA LANG! BINABARGAIN!
ANO PO ANG TINITINDA NYO?
MENTAL HOSPITAL!
NAKAWALA YATA 'TO, E!

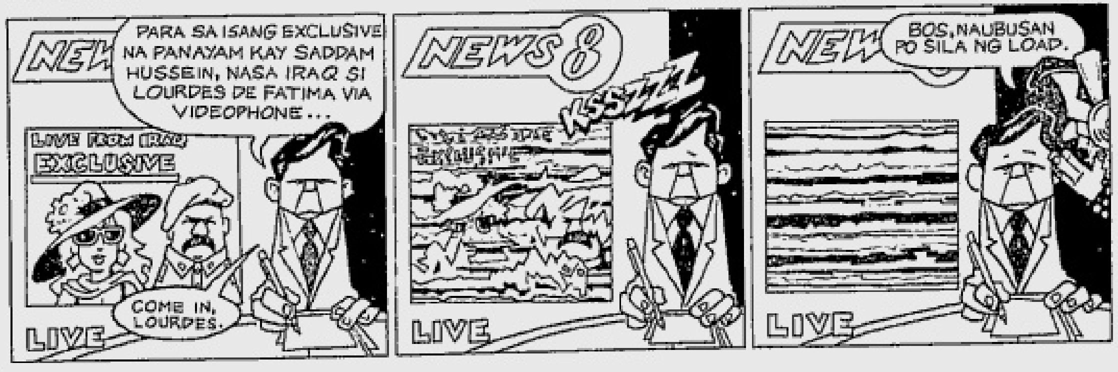
### PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


BROSIA, DAPAT CHRISTMAS COSTUME ANG ISUOT MO...
PANG-CHRISTMAS NAMAN 'TO A. YOUUUUU...
... BETTER WATCH OUT YOU BETTER NOT CRY YOU BETTER NOT POUT I'M TELLING YOU WHY ...
SADA-KO IS COMING...
TO TOWN.
PUMASOK KA NA NGA.
PMJR1203

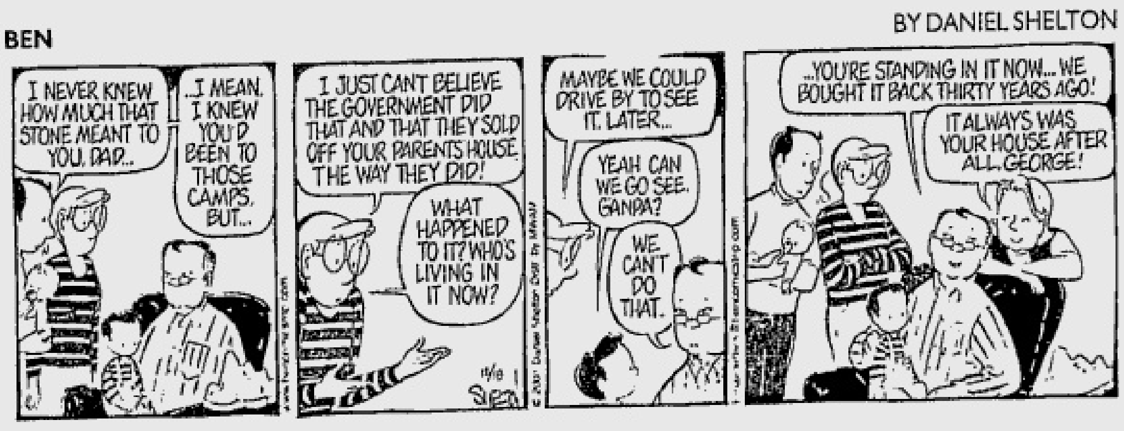
### MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


PU...
PU...
PU...
ARG.
YOU CAN'T FAKE A PURR.
mutts.comics.com
12-16

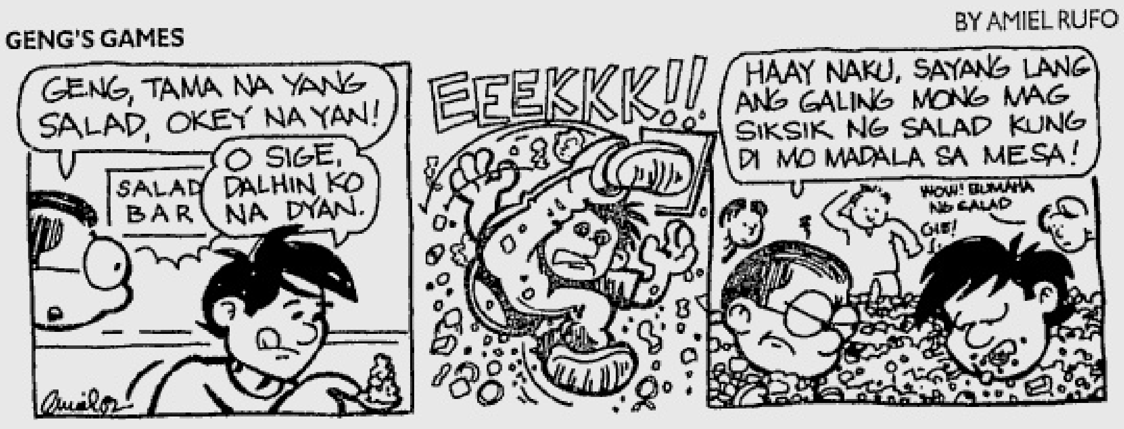
### NEWSMARYOSEP
BY RON RUIZ


PARA SA ISANG EXCLUSIVE NA PANAYAM KAY SADDAM HUSSEIN, NASA IRAQ SI LOURDES DE FATIMA VIA VIDEOPHONE...
NEWS 8
LIVE FROM IRAQ EXCLUSIVE
COME IN, LOURDES.
LIVE
KSSZZZ
LIVE
BOS, NAUBUSAN PO SILA NG LOAD.
LIVE

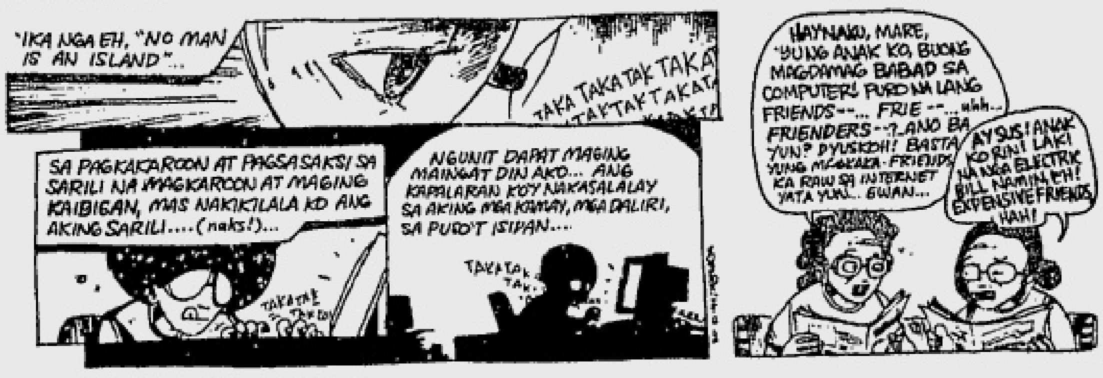
### BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


I NEVER KNEW HOW MUCH THAT STONE MEANT TO YOU, DAD...
...I MEAN, I KNEW YOU'D BEEN TO THOSE CAMPS, BUT...
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT DID THAT AND THAT THEY SOLD OFF YOUR PARENTS HOUSE THE WAY THEY DID!
WHAT HAPPENED TO IT? WHO'S LIVING IN IT NOW?
MAYBE WE COULD DRIVE BY TO SEE IT LATER...
YEAH CAN WE GO SEE, GANPA?
WE CAN'T DO THAT.
...YOU'RE STANDING IN IT NOW... WE BOUGHT IT BACK THIRTY YEARS AGO!
IT ALWAYS WAS YOUR HOUSE AFTER ALL, GEORGE!

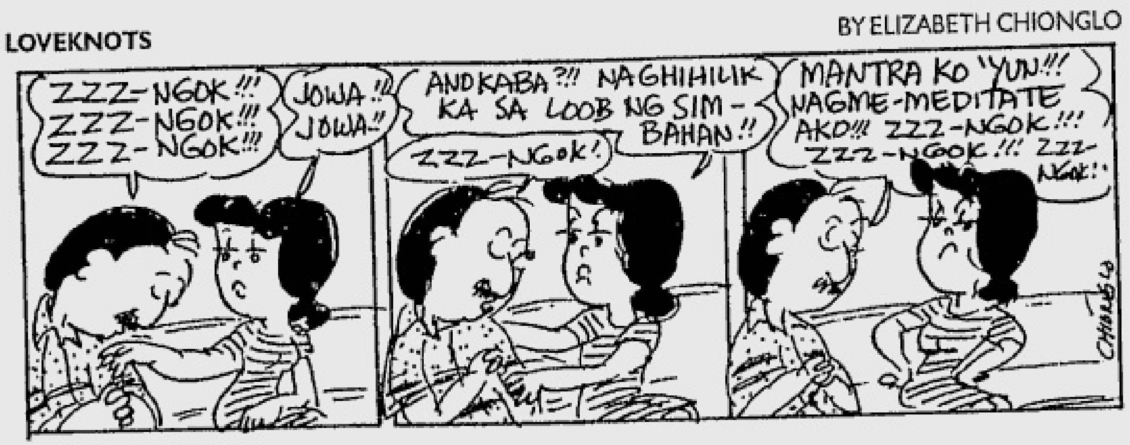
### GENG'S GAMES
BY AMIEL RUFO


GENG, TAMA NA YANG SALAD, OKEY NA YAN!
SALAD BAR
O SIGE, DALHIN KO NA DYAN.
EEEKKK!!
HAAY NAKU, SAYANG LANG ANG GALING MONG MAG SIKSIK NG SALAD KUNG DI MO MADALA SA MESA!
WOW! BUMAHA NG SALAD
OIE!

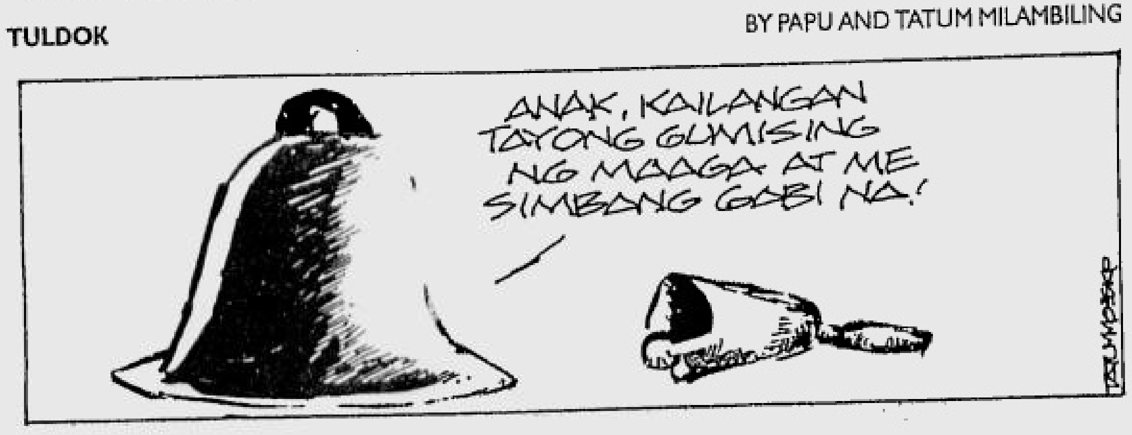
### KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


"IKA NGA EH, "NO MAN IS AN ISLAND"...
TAKA TAKA TAK TAKA TAKTAK TAKAT
SA PAGKAKAROON AT PAGSASAKSI SA SARILI NA MAGKAROON AT MAGING KAIBIGAN, MAS NAKIKILALA KO ANG AKING SARILI....(naks!)...
TAKATAK TAKTAK
NGUNIT DAPAT MAGING MAINGAT DIN AKO... ANG KAPALARAN KO'Y NAKASALALAY SA AKING MGA KAMAY, MGA DALIRI, SA PUSO'T ISIPAN...
TAKATAK TAK
HAYNAKU, MARE, 'YUNG ANAK KO, BUONG MAGDAMAG BABAD SA COMPUTER! PURO NA LANG FRIENDS--... FRIE--...uhh... FRIENDERS--?..ANO BA YUN? DYUSKOH! BASTA YUNG MGAKAKA-FRIENDS KA RAW SA INTERNET YATA YUN... EWAN...
AYSUS! ANAK KO RIN! LAKI NA NGA ELECTRIC BILL NAMIN, EH! EXPENSIVE FRIENDS HAH!

### LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ZZZ-NGOK!!! ZZZ-NGOK!!! ZZZ-NGOK!!!
JOWA!! JOWA!!
ANDKABA?!! NAGHIHILIK KA SA LOOB NG SIMBAHAN!!
ZZZ-NGOK!
MANTRA KO 'YUN!!! NAGME-MEDITATE AKO!!! ZZZ-NGOK!!! ZZZ-NGOK!!! ZZZ-NGOK!
CHIONGLO

### TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANAK, KAILANGAN TAYONG GUMISING NG MAAGA AT ME SIMBANG GABI NA!

# ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

*Editor* Louie C. Camino

# Juday on Robin: I'll never break up a marriage

## *'Is it my fault if people are so malicious?'*

THE UNIDENTIFIED "other woman" says, "Do I have to explain where I went and who I was with?" JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

**By Marinel R. Cruz**

ACTRESS Judy Ann Santos said she hopes her telenovela costar Robin Padilla and his wife would finally reconcile for the sake of their children.

"I'm happy whenever I see a family that's intact because I've never had a complete family," the actress said. "I would never be the reason a family like Robin's would fall apart."

Judy Ann said she and Robin now have to avoid each other to keep "malicious people" from spreading rumors about them, including the talk that he had made her pregnant.

The young star told INQUIRER Entertainment last week that her working relationship with Robin was affected by the gossip that she had caused the breakup of the 17-year marriage of Robin and Liezl Sycangco.

Robin and Liezl have four children. Liezl and the children—Roselle Elizabeth, 12, Kylie Nicole, 10, Sherileen Zel, 9, and Robinhood Fernando, 3—have been living in Queensland, Australia for three years.

"We have to avoid seeing each other when we are not taping so people who are talking about us will finally keep their mouths shut," said Judy Ann, also popularly known by her nickname, Juday.

In a phone call to "Startalk" on GMA 7 a few Saturdays ago, Liezl had said she had decided to split from her husband, citing another' woman, whom she did not identify, as the reason.

Judy Ann said she was sad that because of the gossip, "two people who used to be close friends have to stay away from each other. Our work gets affected because of that."

Judy Ann, whose parents separated when she was 5 years old, said the most painful thing said about her was that she was a home-wrecker.

"I come from a broken family," she said. "I've not seen my father since I was 5. I will not allow my children to experience what I've been through."

During the phone call to "Startalk," which the TV show aired, Leizl said she heard that Robin was with his other woman for a two-day Halloween vacation in Tagaytay City.

Judy Ann denied she had gone to Tagaytay with Robin that weekend, saying she was in Batangas with some of her cousins.

"But people assumed that Robin went to Tagaytay with me because I'm his current leading lady," she said. "Is it my fault if other people are so malicious?

"Why do I have to tell people where I was on that day? That would only make me look guilty. Do I have to explain what I did in Batangas and who I was with?"

Judy Ann said she has learned a lot from the rumor linking her to Robin. She said she realized how far she would go to defend the people she loves, especially her mother Carol who was greatly affected by the intrigue.

"Mommy knows me more than anyone else," the daughter said. "She knows what the truth is.

"What's good about the issue is that I realized who my true friends were. They believed what I said. Some of them even called me up to ask me how I was."

Judy Ann plays Princess Gonzalez, a young law graduate, while Robin is Ambet Catindig, a policeman, in "Basta't Kasama Kita," shown on week nights on ABS-CBN.

According to the actress, she and her TV character are alike in many ways. "Princess is a strong and dedicated lawyer who always lives by the book," she pointed out.

"She's Catindig's exact opposite. He makes decisions based on gut feel. Robin is like that in many ways. He is always willing to defend others. He is a selfless person and most people don't know that. Robin Hood *nga e*."

BEFORE THE RUMOR. Juday and Binoe at the ABS-CBN anniversary bash

# Surprise twist

**VIEWFINDER**

*Nestor U. Torre*

RICHARD Donner, the director of blockbusters like "Lethal Weapon" and "Superman," has come up with a different kind of movie, "Timeline," topbilling young stars **Paul Walker** and **Frances O'Connor**.

"Timeline" is a mystifying look into the future with a surprise twist. It's a about a team of student archaeologists who are digging at a medieval site in France. Suddenly, their professor disappears—into the 14th century!

The students embark on a perilous journey to rescue him, and find him in the middle of a feudal war. The students find that they're not just excavating the past—they're living it!

In "Gothika," **Halle Berry** plays Dr. Miranda Gray, a brilliant criminal psychologist. She treats dangerously disturbed patients with composure and good judgment—until she encounters a mysterious girl, leading to a horrific nightmare.

When she awakens, she's shocked to learn that her husband has been murdered, and she's the primary suspect. As a result, Miranda finds herself locked up with the highly unstable patients she used to treat.

Miranda is forced to rely on her instincts rather than the facts, and believes that she has been possessed by a supernatural force, whom she suspects is determined to exact revenge at the expense of her sanity.

How can she convince people that she is neither guilty or crazy?

Other lead roles are played by **Robert Downey Jr.** and **Penelope Cruz**, and "Gothika" is directed by **Robert Zemeckis**.

For his part, young comic **Jack Black** topbills "The School of Rock." In the fun-filled flick, Black is cast as guitarist Dewey Finn, who's determined to lead his rock group to victory at the Battle of the Bands. Shockingly, his bandmates fire him instead!

Down on his luck and with no money to pay the rent, Dewey impulsively agrees to work as a substitute teacher at an exclusive grade school. He may not know how to teach, but he's a past master at inspiring confidence in his pupils.

And when he hears them performing in orchestra class, he works hard to mold his young musical prodigies into a high-voltage rock band. Their lives are changed forever!

**Joan Cusack** costars.

"Rugrats Go Wild" casts **Tim Curry** as Sir Nigel Thornberry, who takes his family to a tropical island to pursue a huge cat. His daughter Eliza gets the gift of talking to animals.

Meanwhile, the Rugrats are on vacation, but are thrown overboard and washed ashore on the island. So, the Thornberry and Rugrats families collide.

### 'Kill Bill'

WITH "Pulp Fiction" and "Reservoir Dogs," writer-director **Quentin Tarantino** has made a name for himself as a filmmaker who dotes

SURPRISE/ A27

# Jay-R, Hot Babe caught kissing in bar

**DOLLYWOOD**

*Dolly Ann Carvajal*

I SPOTTED Jay-R and Gwen Garci smooching during after-hours at a popular joint.

A lot of interesting scenes happen way past midnight and a lunar-powered creature like me always happens to be where the action is. Maybe they both just had a few too many drinks so their defenses were down. Nothing wrong with PDA (public display of affection) as long as it's within the bounds of decency.

But I wonder why Jay-R's production assistant reprimanded the fotog covering the event in the bar and asked if he took pics of Gwen and Jay-R kissing. She even checked the lensman's camera to make sure there were no shots of the two in their unguarded moments.

I bumped into Jay-R again in the same bar, this time with **Angelika de la Cruz**. But they were in the company of friends and they were obviously just *barkada*.

Jay-R is on a roll in his career so it's no surprise if he is seen in the company of pretty and sexy ladies.

### Lorin's dedication

RUFFA and Yilmaz's *unica hija* **Lorin Gabrielle** will be having a Christian "dedication" on Dec. 21 at The Loft Rockwell.

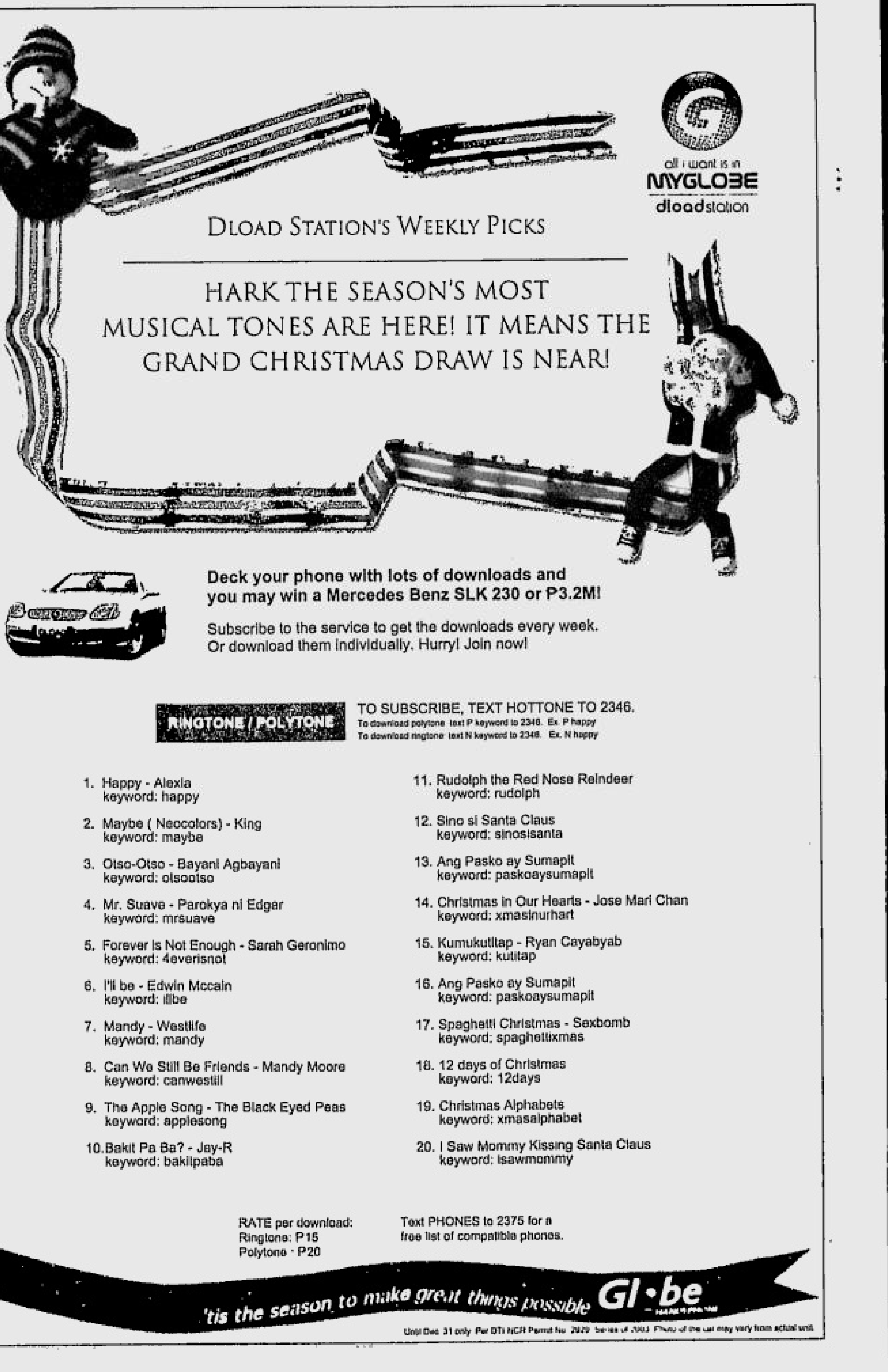
According to Ruffa, Lorin is not show biz at all because once the cameras and lights are on, she throws a tantrum and sometimes throws up. But with her mom's elan and poise, I'm sure Lorin in time will take after Ruffa and wow the public the world over.

### 3 in a row

BLOOMBERG Television presenter, our very own **Catherine Yang**, has won the title of best news presenter for the third year in a row at the Asian Television Awards, presented in Singapore.

Cathy presents "Moneycast Asia," Bloomberg Television's flagship morning financial news program, broadcast around the

JAY-R/ A26



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# Jay-R, Hot Babe caught kissing...

From page A25

globe live each weekday from Tokyo.

"Moneycast Asia" was also nominated for best business news program.

Cathy has definitely gone a long way from her "Usapang Business" days on ABS-CBN 2 but she is not one who would sit on her laurels and she continues to strive to outdo herself.

Kudos to you, Cathy! You give Pinays a good name, especially in Japayuki land!

## How to kiss

FOR the very first time, top TV-movie comedian **Vic Sotto** pairs up with sex goddess **Ara Mina** in one hilarious action-adventure movie, "Fantastic Man," from OctoArts Films and M-Zet Productions. This is the outfit's official entry to the 2003 Metro Manila Film Festival.

In "Fantastic Man," Vic and Ara have numerous kissing scenes. Each kissing scene, according to Ara, was memorably amusing to shoot.

"Bossing (Vic) said that he's not used to doing kissing scenes and I needed to teach him," recalls Ara. "It's so funny of him to say that because every time we shoot a kissing scene, he would ask me to teach him."

Vic says it is his way of making his leading ladies at ease. "Doing kissing scenes makes any woman nervous so I inject a little humor to relax them," he says. "It's fun for me because I get to learn new kissing styles."

Let's see if their kisses will be sweet enough for the even sweeter smell of success at the box office.

## Personal

WELCOME back to **Billy Legazpi**. If I had only one Christmas wish, it would be that you'd stay here for keeps.

Birthday hugs and kisses to my fun and funky writer friend **Jet Valle**! Glad we speak the same lingo.

Thanks for the A-1 service, **Larry Borlagdan** and Ed of Kotse Network at the Riverbanks in Marikina.

*For feedback, e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaith@yahoo.com*

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| ACT-2 | KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT |
| ACT-3 | ORIGINAL SIN |
| ACT-4 | HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY |
| CORONET A | ALIPIN |
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| REMAR | X-MEN 2 |
| REMAR-2 | BOLD STAR |

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

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|---|---|
| A | ANG BABAE SA BREAKWATER |
| B | AKO, IKAW, SIYA |
| C | |

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| CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL) | OUT OF TIME |
| CINEMA-5 (DTS) | STAR RUNNER |
| CINEMA-6 | CHAVIT |
| CINEMA-7 | BABAE SA BREAKWATER |
| CINEMA-8 | 18 KARATS |
| CINEMA-9 (DTS) | GOOD BOY |
| CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL) | MYSTIC RIVER |
| CINEMA-11 (SDDS) | RUGRATS GO WILD |
| CINEMA-12 | CABIN FEVER |
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| CINEMA-15 | ELF |

LORES

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| CINEMA-2 | SENSUAL ISLAND |
| CINEMA-3 | KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT |

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

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| (LAS PIÑAS) | WRONG TURN |
| CINEMA-1 | CHAVIT |
| CINEMA-2 | LOONEY TUNES |
| CINEMA-4 | DARK BLUE |

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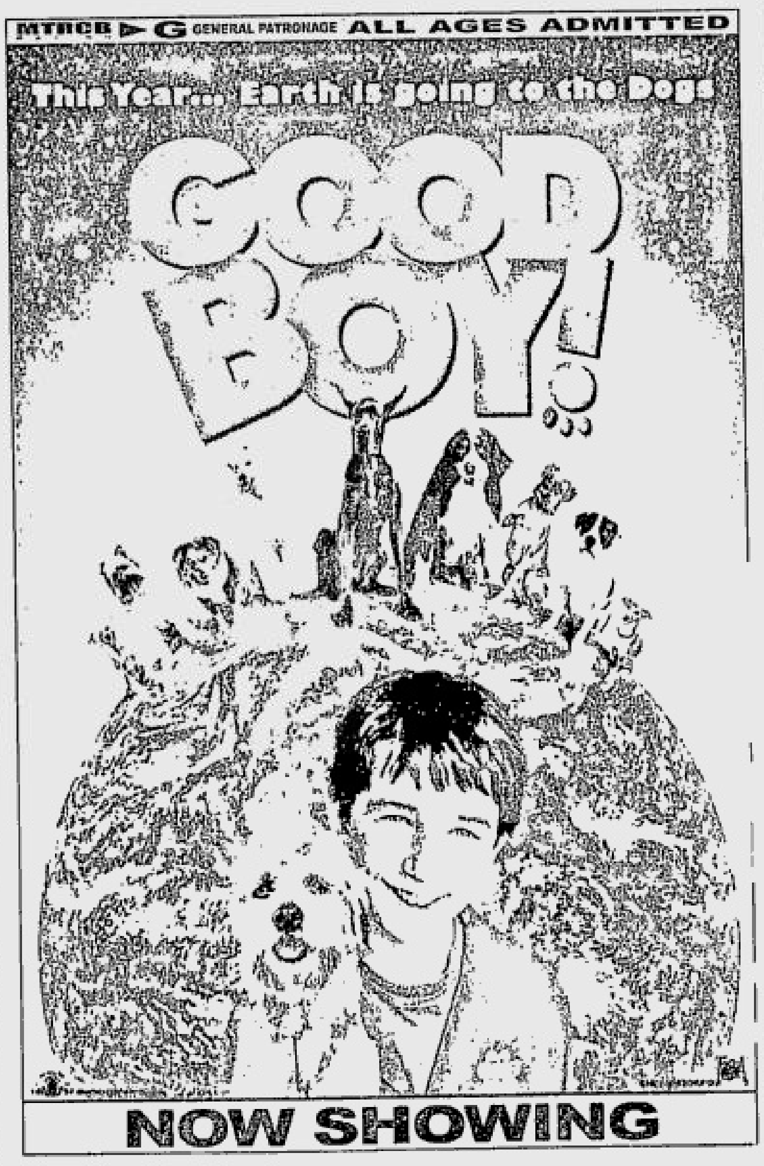
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| 6 (DOLBY) | INTERNET QUEEN |
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REVIEW

# It's about being silly, silly

**By Ruben M. Cruz Jr.**
*Contributor*

I'M the kind of grownup who still laughs out loud at Looney Tunes cartoons whenever I catch it on Cartoon Network. Sometimes, I laugh so loud that my wife gives me this "haven't-you-seen-this-one-before?" look. Often, I have seen the episode. What the hell is wrong with me?

I can't help it, though. I believe with all my heart that comedy always depends on context. Tragedy is when you see someone go over a very tall cliff. There's nothing even remotely funny in that—but, ah, if it's Wile E. Coyote…

I like cartoons, especially Bugs Bunny and his loony company. I offer no apologies. It's one of the many rituals left over from childhood that gives me an inexplicable inner joy.

When I was still a bachelor, I dreamed that someday I would get married and have kids and we would watch cartoons together, laughing at Bugs and Daffy, or Sylvester and Tweety, or Roadrunner and Wile, or some other cartoon that I've seen a million times.

It's one of the few dreams I've had in my life come true. I get to watch cartoons with my wife and kids—and laugh out loud. Oddly enough, regardless of what psychologists and sociologists say about watching TV, cartoons especially, this thought comforts me rather than worries me.

So there, that's the context of this review. I don't care if "Looney Tunes: Back in Action" is something created only for commodity marketing. I don't care if the novelty factor of having cartoon characters and live actors on the same screen has worn off. I don't care if its story calls for the ultimate suspension of disbelief. That's just dumb, grown-up stuff and right now I don't feel like being a dumb, grown-up movie reviewer.

For me, the movie does a magnificent job of capturing the spirit of a child. My kids loved it. Indeed, they want to see it again. Contrary to what some people think, children are not so easy to please. Indeed, they could be quite picky when it comes to entertainment.

## Sustained silliness

"Looney Tunes" has the same in-your-face wackiness as its TV cartoon cousin, just technically more superior in terms of craftsmanship. Sure, it's been done before, combining real actors and animated cartoon characters in the same time and space and making it look real. Think "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" and "Space Jam." But that doesn't make the movie any less exhilarating to see.

I know what they say about the formula: technical spectacle minus a good story equals not much of a movie. I know that applies to animated features, too. But for "Looney Tunes," a story that is less than cartoonish would be downright insulting. It's supposed to be about being silly, silly.

And for sustained silliness, this one takes the cake. It starts out with Daffy having a major Hollywood-movie-studio-argument with the Warner brothers and their board about his treatment as a second-class citizen in the film company. He chronicles his lowly, self-loathing existence in the typical Daffy Duck way and rants about why Bugs Bunny gets all the credit and the star billing. Of course, this gets him not only fired but also banished from the studio premises forever.

From there, it somehow gets to a point where Bugs and Daffy, together with the characters of Jenna Elfman (Dharma on TV's "Dharma and Greg") and Brendan Fraser have to save the world from a dastardly plot to turn everyone on earth into monkeys so they can provide cheap labor for Acme Corporation, the supplier of Wile E. Coyote's unpredictable rocket sleds, faulty spring-powered shoes and whatever else that doesn't work.

**ANIMATED.** Brendan Fraser shares a scene with Daffy.

> It's a valentine to the cartoon characters of my youth

Along the seemingly endless parade of pratfalls, throwaway gags, inside jokes and one-liners, the entire cast of Looney Tunes cartoon characters—and some from other Warner Brothers cartoons—make cameo appearances. They even get to poke at their own screen images, as when Mexican Speedy Gonzales and the stuttering Porky Pig, in one of the movie's many strokes of sly wit, lament the age of political correctness, which now bears down oh their traditional characters like the laws of gravity.

Leave it to the wonderful imagination and fantasy world of cartoons, or more aptly, to "Looney Tunes" director Joe Dante and writer Larry Doyle, to come up with something as righteously ridiculous. Dante helmed "Gremlin," that film with the cute but rascally creatures (not to mention Phoebe Cates), and a segment in "Twilight Zone" the movie wherein a kid's fascination with cartoons brought mayhem to his home (that was really scary though, not funny at all).

"Looney Tunes" is more than just a big-screen babysitter for your children. At least for this grownup, it's a valentine to the cartoon characters of my youth, kindred spirits who just happen to live in the world of animation.

What else can I say? That's all, folks!

---

# Surprise . . .

From page A25

on quirky characters, time-warping narratives, offbeat wit, and a sense of "casual" evil.

Now, with his new film, "Kill Bill," Tarantino ups the ante in terms of cinematic edginess. The movie is his homage to this favorite genres—spaghetti Westerns, Chinese martial arts, Japanese samurai movies and animé.

Tarantino wrote and rewrote the script for the film for an entire year.

To get through the rough spots during this long period, he would watch at least one Hong Kong movie a day, plus a lot of samurai films and animé.

He shares, "The images from these movies filled my head until they were second nature, and that became the raw material for 'Kill Bill.'"

Tarantino's latest movie is about a lady assassin who seeks to avenge herself against her boss, after he tries to kill her and slaughters the people at the dress rehearsal for her wedding.

Stars include Uma Thurman, David Carradine, Daryl Hannah and Lucy Liu.

## 'Out of Time'

CINEMA (Catholic Initiative for Enlightened Movie Appreciation) evaluates the film "Out of Time" as technically above-average and morally acceptable:

"In the film, Denzel Washington plays a police chief who has an affair with the wife of an abusive man. She has cancer, so he helps her by giving her money intended to be used in the cops' pursuit of drug groups. Later, Washington's character realizes the seriousness of his infraction.

"The events in the story aren't new, but a few innovative twists give viewers some interesting moments.

"Performances are credible, Washington makes his character a person to be sympathized with, and the music provides the atmosphere needed by the 'darkish' story. But there are incidents of violence, and a couple of sexual issues."

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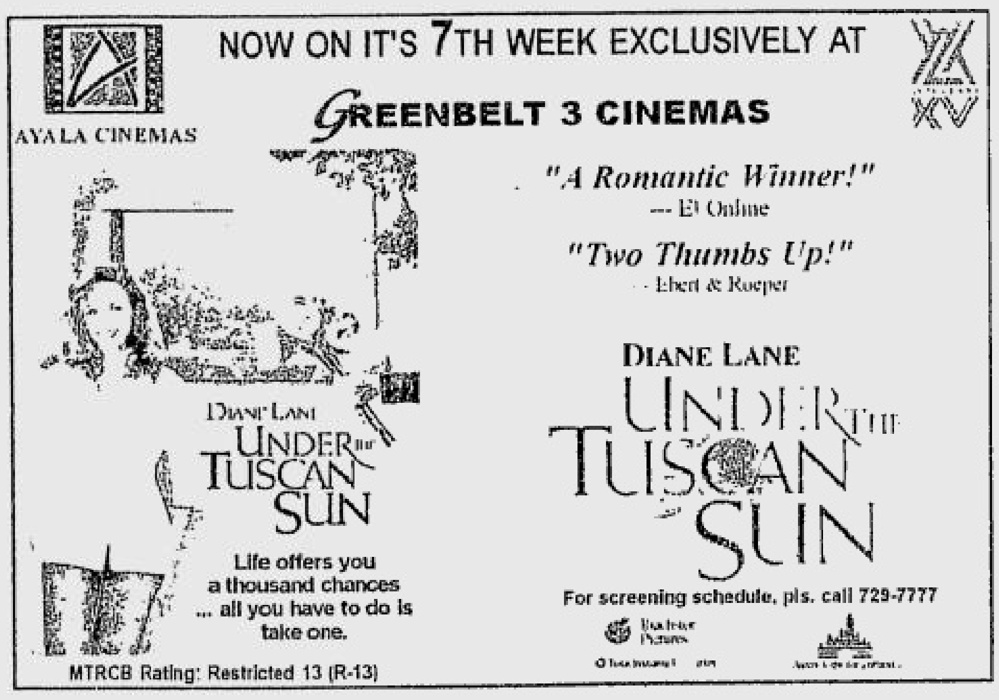

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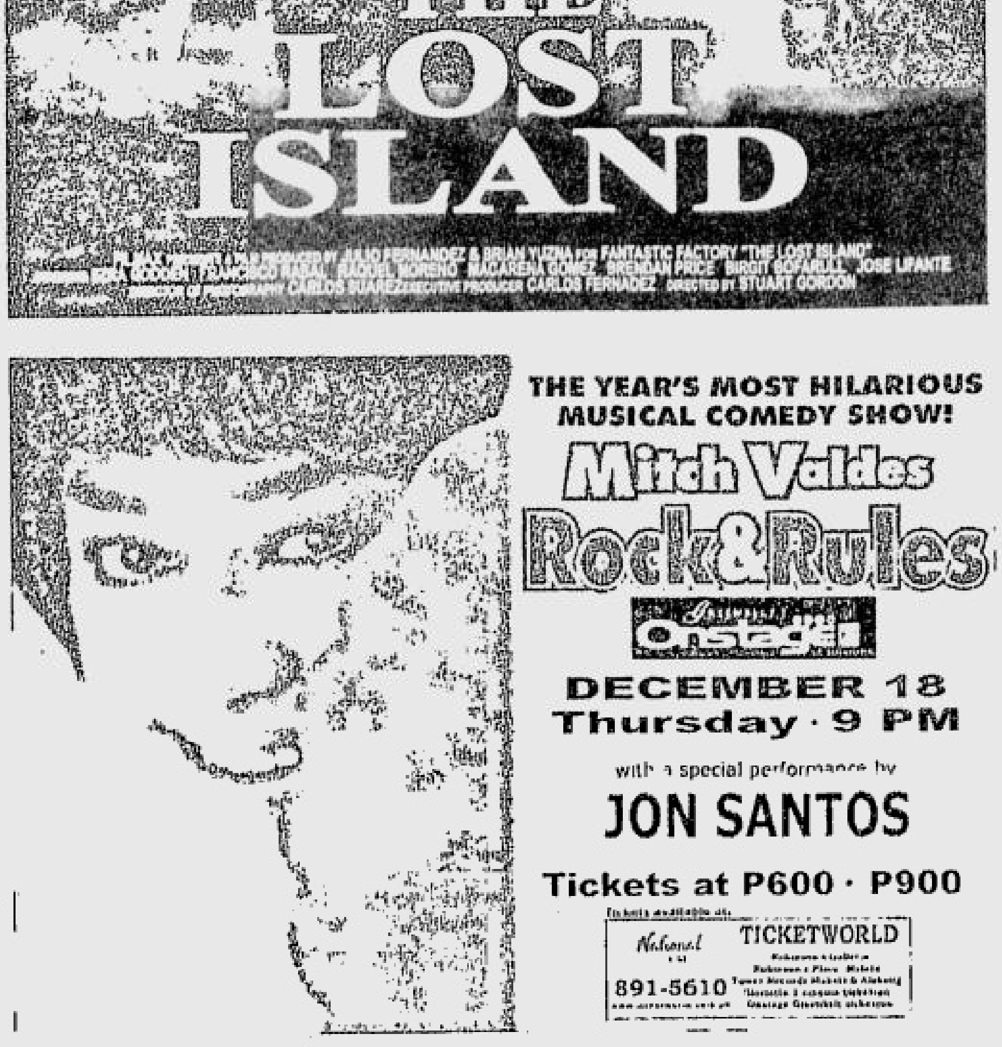
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)



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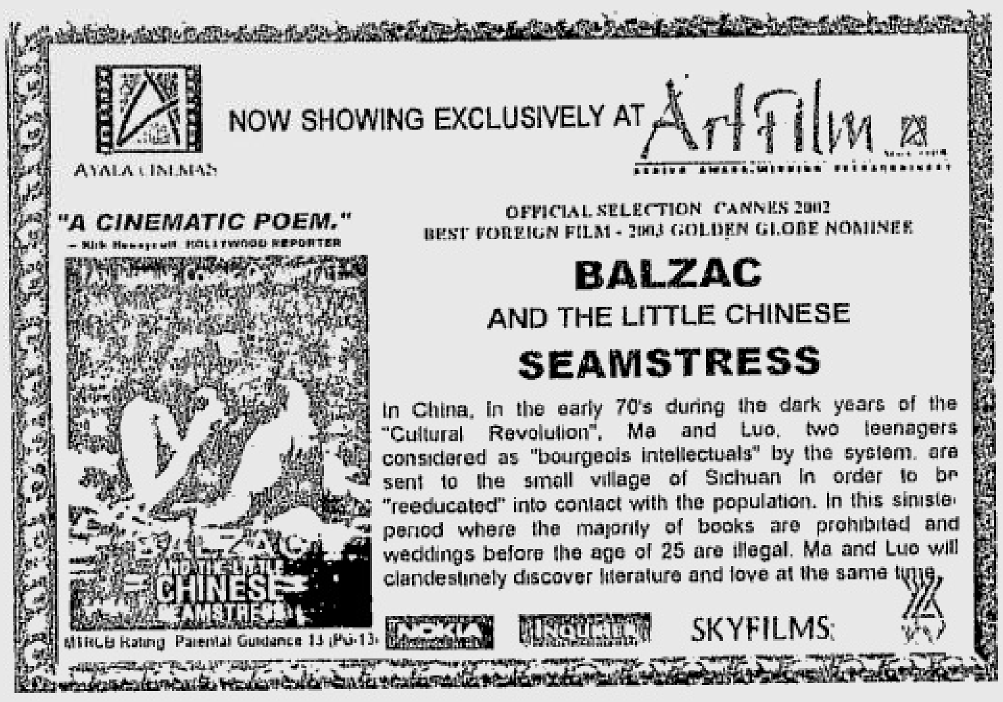

AYALA CINEMAS
NOW SHOWING EXCLUSIVELY AT ArtFilm
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— HOLLYWOOD REPORTER
OFFICIAL SELECTION CANNES 2002
BEST FOREIGN FILM - 2003 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINEE
BALZAC
AND THE LITTLE CHINESE
SEAMSTRESS
In China, in the early 70's during the dark years of the "Cultural Revolution", Ma and Luo, two teenagers considered as "bourgeois intellectuals" by the system, are sent to the small village of Sichuan in order to be "reeducated" into contact with the population. In this sinister period where the majority of books are prohibited and weddings before the age of 25 are illegal. Ma and Luo will clandestinely discover literature and love at the same time.
SKYFILMS
MTRCB Rating Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

# 'Tis the Season to be jolly.
# 'Tis the Season to be at the

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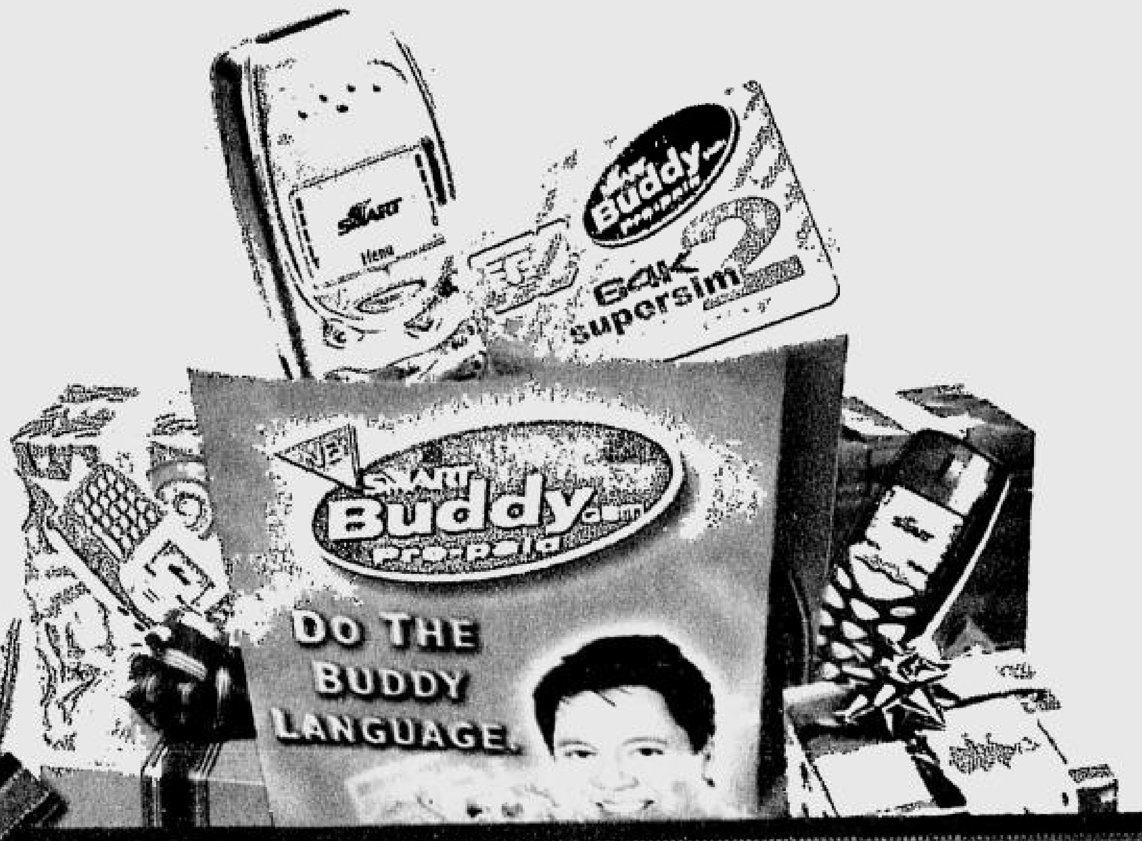

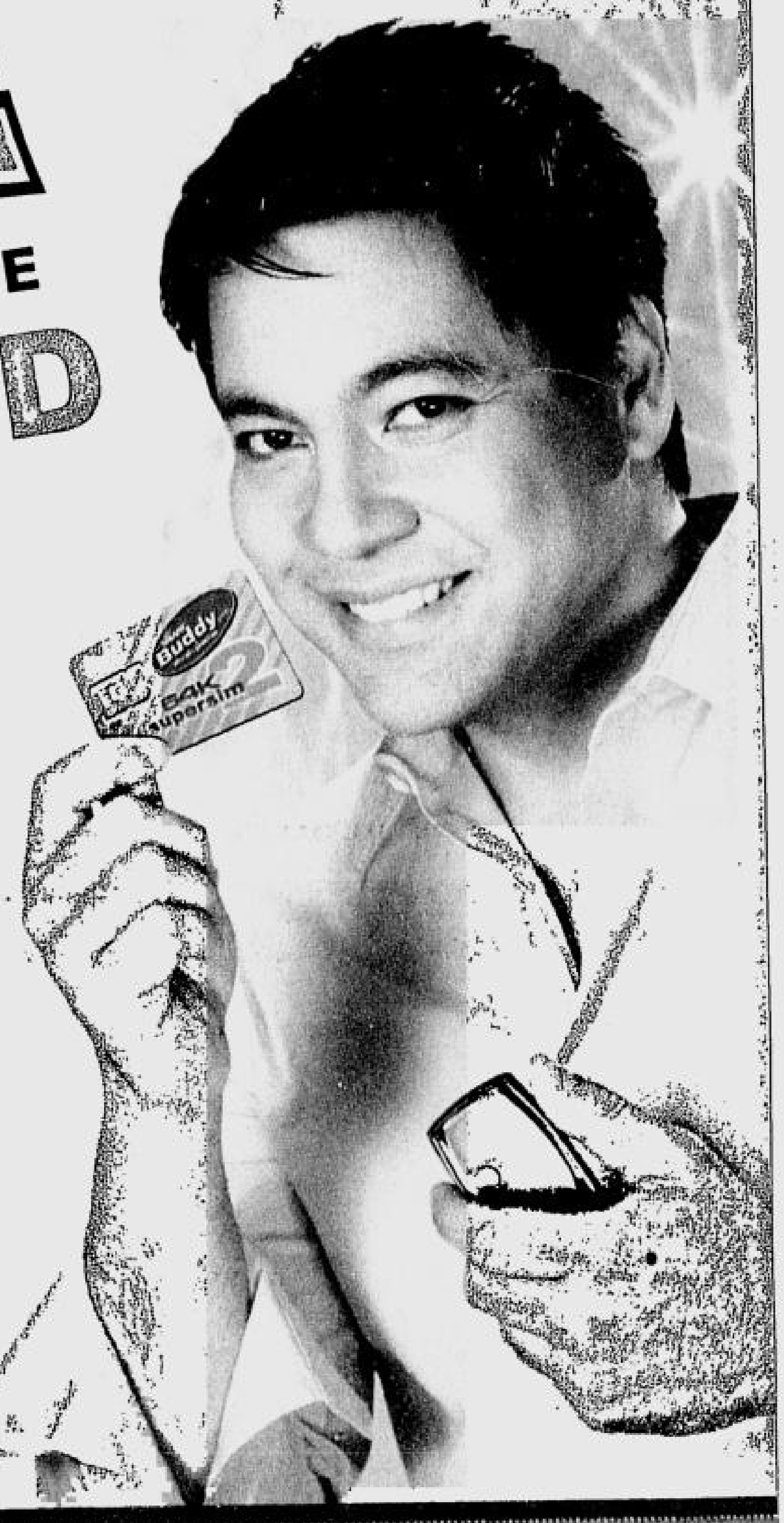

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Nov. 18 - Dennis Gumpad *Quezon City*
Nov. 19 - Gerry Matamorosa *Camarines Sur*
Nov. 20 - Marites Luagas *Bicutan*
Nov. 21 - Ruby Chong *Sta. Mesa, Manila*
Nov. 22 - Juliet Anosan *Baguio City*
Nov. 23 - Maricar De Dios *Pasig City*
Nov. 24 - Paolo Pila *Quezon City*
Nov. 25 - Glenn Capagulo *Taguig Metro Manila*
Nov. 26 - Jorge Fajardo *Sorsogon City*
Nov. 27 - Ligaya Corpez *Quezon City*
Nov. 28 - Cristina Calinog *San Miguel, Bulacan*
Nov. 29 - Gerry Leonila *Quezon City*
Nov. 30 - Ivy Enriquez *Zamboanga City*
Dec. 1 - Teresita G. Adello *Talon, Las Piñas*
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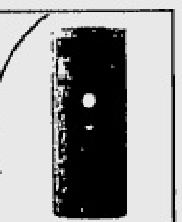
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# OFW remittances surge to $6.3B

By Clarissa S. Batino

**DOLLAR inflow from more than seven million overseas workers has reached $6.336 billion as of October, up by 5.7 percent from $5.996 billion a year ago despite a 10-percent contraction in the number of Filipinos who left for employment abroad this year.**

For October alone, dollar remittances stood at $673 million, up by 11 percent from $607 million a year ago and higher by 12.3 percent from the previous month's $560 million, documents from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

"Once again, our global workers have delivered to make up for the shortfall in foreign direct investments, portfolio investments, and even exports," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said in an interview.

The BSP chief said he was confident that Filipino workers' remittances would hit the targetted growth of 6 percent to $7.6 billion by year's end and that the level would hit the $8-billion mark by the end of 2004.

Overseas workers' remittances not only help stabilize the peso by providing a steady supply of dollars in the spot market but also prop up the domestic economy through consumption and investments, Buenaventura said.

"We hope our OFWs would sustain the trend and continue to perk up consumption by way of spending for housing and education as well as investment in small and medium businesses," Buenaventura added.

Dollar remittances are expected to peak in November and December as Filipinos abroad send money to their families for the seasonal Christmas spending.

The BPS chief said that despite the contraction in the level of deployment, particularly among land-based workers, the quality of Filipinos who left had offset the slowdown.

He said more Filipinos left for higher-paying employment offshore like professionals and service workers to cushion the drop in actual number of OFWs.

The number of deployed land-based workers dropped by 13.2 percent to 520,597 as of October while the level of sea-based workers grew by 1.3 percent to 178,094. The number of new hires and re-hires as of October was 9.9 percent lower from the previous year at 698,691.

The labor department is targetting to deploy a million Filipinos to overseas this year. In 2002, the POEA said the level of freshly hired and re-hired reached 891,908 versus 867,599 the pre-

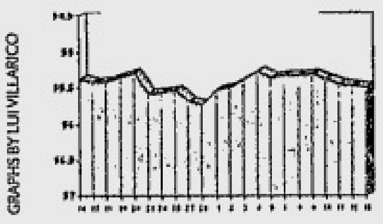
OFW/B4

## *Markets celebrate Saddam capture*

ASIAN stocks jumped, bonds fell and the dollar rose yesterday as markets celebrated the capture of Saddam Hussein, but any gains were expected to be fleeting as investors worried about global security and US deficits. *Story on page B5.*

## INDICATORS

### CURRENCIES



NOVEMBER DECEMBER

**PESO-DOLLAR RATE**

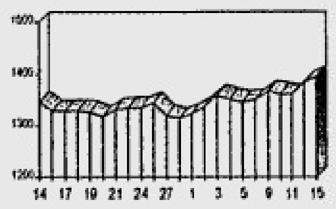
P 55.49= $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 15, 2003

¥ 107.94 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 15, 2003

GOLD: $403.60-404.10
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 15, 2003

### STOCK MARKET

**PSE COMPOSITE INDEX**



(See stock market report on Page B2)

## Stocks rise on Saddam news, PLDT leads

STOCKS rose to their highest level since Nov. 10 yesterday after the capture of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein eased worries about global security and inspired follow-through buying in blue chips.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), the nation's largest phone firm, was the most active stock and rose P20 or 2.27 percent to P900.

Globe Telecom Inc., PLDT's closest rival, also topped the table of net gainers by adding P20 or 2.56 percent to P800.

"Local investors anticipated the run-up in New York given the Saddam-less new year," said Astro del Castillo, managing director of financial management firm First Grade Holdings Inc.

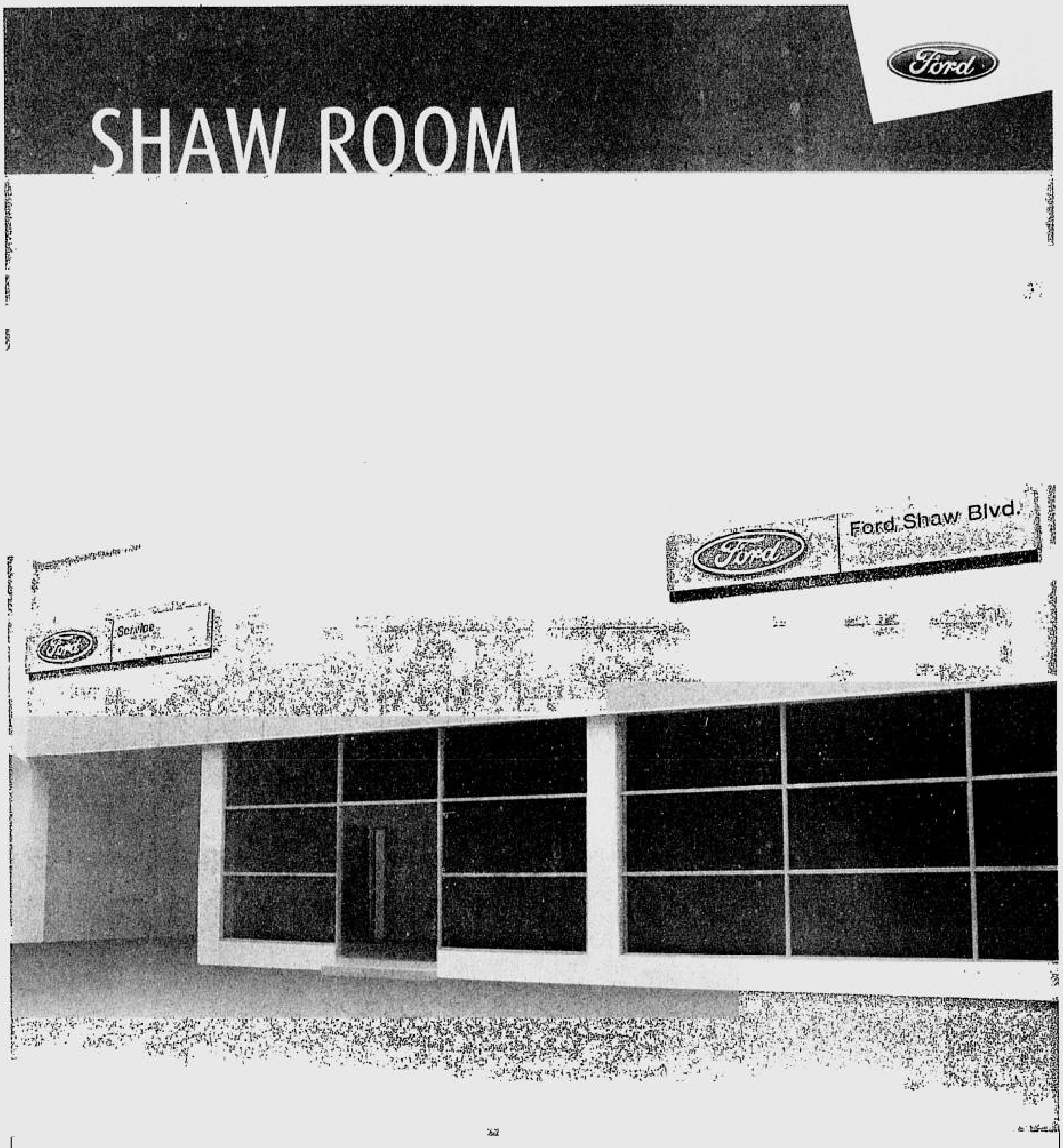
The main index closed 11.91 points or 0.86 percent higher at 1,395.23 points. It is up 37 percent this year.

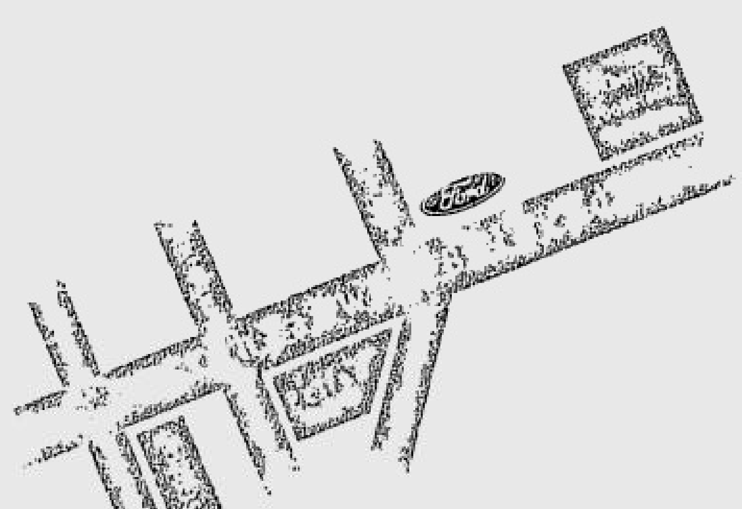
Gainers beat losers 27 to 19 and there were 33 stocks unchanged. Turnover fell to P630.88 million from Friday's P776.14 million.

Analysts said Saddam's capture would lead to a swifter end of US involvement in Iraq and decrease US military spending, which should be a plus for the American economy. The United States is the Philippines' largest trading partner.

"Fundamentally, investors are anticipating major companies to end 2003 with better earnings, if the third quarter was an indication," Del Castillo said.

AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan said he expected the market to keep its positive bias and move within a range of 1,360 to 1,450 points in coming sessions. *Reuters*





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# It's Saddam big boost for Bush

## MR. BEARBULL

*Ron Nathan*

AN AIRPLANE was about to crash with 5 passengers and only 4 parachutes. The first passenger, Jerry Yan, said, "I am the lead singer of Meteor Garden, the most successful telenovela in the world. If I die, millions of women around the world will mourn so I will take the first parachute."

The second passenger was Efren "Bata" Reyes. With his usual sheepish grin and in an apologetic voice, he said, "I have been the best 9-ball pool player in Asia for many years. If I die, Filipinos around the world will be devastated, so I must take the second parachute."

The third passenger was President Bush. He said, "I am the leader of the world's most powerful nation and I am also the most intelligent President the US has ever had. So I am taking the third parachute."

This left only the Pope, and a 10-year old boy. The Pope said benignly, "I have lived a very long and useful life. I am ready to meet my maker. You still have your life ahead of you so you must take the last parachute."

The boy smiled and said, "Your Holiness, your sacrifice is unnecessary as there are still 2 parachutes remaining, one for each of us."

"How so?" asked the Pope.

The boy replied, "President Bush, who is the most intelligent President the US has ever had, has mistakenly taken my school bag."

HEAVEN IS A PLACE WHERE
The lovers are Filipino
The cooks are French
The mechanics are German
The police are English
The government is run by the Swiss.
HELL IS A PLACE WHERE
The lovers are Swiss
The cooks are English
The mechanics are French
The police are German
The government is run by Filipinos.

The Queen of England is having an operation on her knee. She wanted to come to the Philippines to have it done but the British Travel Advisory Service ruled it out as unsafe. Her husband, Prince Philip, conferred a knighthood on Mick Jagger. Sir Mick sounds ridiculous so he will be known as Circumference.

* * *

MR. CAMACHO wrote a bearish article on the economy and said that we needed to shift to a parliamentary system with a strong leader who would not hesitate to make tough decisions. These would include additional taxes on alcohol and cigarettes, which are essential if we were going to get to grips with the budget deficit. We would no longer have a Senate spending its time fruitlessly questioning José Pidal, as a result of which, they never got around to approving next year's budget. In the UK, we have had a parliamentary system for 700 years and it works extremely well. Perhaps one day, I will write about it.

ADB has just written a very bullish report on Southeast Asia. They have upgraded this year's GDP to 6 percent from 5.5 percent and next year, they are projecting 6.5 percent, up from 6 percent last July. Asia is a net exporter so the recovery in the US, Japan, China and to a lesser extent Europe means that all the countries in the region should be able to increase their exports next year.

There has been a heavy demand for plasma screens and liquid crystal displays at the high end of the market and Thailand, South Korea and Taiwan have benefited. Unfortunately, the Philippines has not adapted so we remain at the low end reassembling motherboards. All we get is the trickle-down effect, the dregs if you like. Because of our perceived political instability, the G3 countries prefer to put up plants elsewhere, particularly in China. I foresee no change in this scenario until after the election and then, only if we have a credible leader.

In the US, the DOW, after 2 false starts, finally broke through the purely psychological level of 10,000. The Nasdaq also had a good rise and TEL, which is quoted in American Deposit Receipts, rose about 5 percent. As arbitrageurs can sell these ADR's in New York and buy the local stock to cover, TEL opened P45 higher at a 2,003 peak of P885. As this is our most heavily traded stock almost everyday, the spillover effect sent our market 29 points higher at the opening and 24 points up at the close. Foreign brokers were net buyers of P71 million, but it was all in TEL. Yesterday, there was a repeat performance with TEL touching P915 and the index gaining a further 12 points, mainly due to TEL and GLOBE.

The rise in the DOW to 10,000 was fueled by news of good retail sales for November, up 0.9 percent and better than expected. The FED changed their wording slightly, saying that the risk of increasing inflation was matched by the risk of falling inflation. Hitherto, they were more concerned by abnormally low inflation, possibly leading to deflation. This sent a signal to the market that the FED is in no hurry to increase rates from the historically low 1 percent. The bond market rallied, but the dollar weakened to a new low against the euro. The November trade deficit was a record $41.8 billion, much of this with China.

All is not yet plain sailing because more companies announced layoffs, and new unemployment claims rose 13,000 last week. New jobs are being created but nowhere near the required rate of 150,000 a month, as promised rashly by Treasury Secretary Snow. So far, the optimists have been proven right. Profits have risen without job creation but it is now starting to improve.

Over the past 6 months, I have not been trading, ever since my blood pressure overtook the Nasdaq. I have continued to write my daily newsletter and I have improved it considerably, according to my subscribers, who love the new format as it gives the risk factor

BEARBULL/B4

## PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 15, 2003)

| STOCKS | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | CLOSE | VOLUME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES | | | | | |
| BANKS | | | | | |
| Asiatrust Dev Bank Inc. | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 15 000 |
| Banco de Oro Univ. Bank | 17.25 | 17.5 | 17.25 | 17.25 | 19.000 |
| Bank of the Phil. Islands | 45.5 | 46 | 45.5 | 45 5 | 126,900 |
| Equitable PCI Bank Inc. | 35 | 35 | 34 | 34 | 42,800 |
| Export and Ind. Bank Inc. | 0.54 | 0.54 | 0.53 | 0.53 | 1,170,000 |
| Metropolitan Bank & Trust | 26.5 | 27.5 | 26.5 | 27 | 724,400 |
| Philippine National Bank | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 15.000 |
| Rizal Comm. Banking Corp. | 12.5 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 2,000 |
| Security Bank Corp. | 16.25 | 16.25 | 16 | 16 | 5,100 |
| Union Bank of the Phil. | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 900 |
| FINANCIAL SERVICES | | | | | |
| ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp. | 2.18 | 2.18 | 2.18 | 2.18 | 70,000 |
| Manulife Financial Corp. | 1730 | 1740 | 1730 | 1740 | 1,080 |
| Phil. Stock Exchange Inc. | 250 | 252.5 | 240 | 240 | 53,700 |
| Sun Life Financial Inc. | 1325 | 1330 | 1325 | 1330 | 160 |
| COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL | | | | | |
| COMMUNICATION | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. | 25.5 | 25.5 | 25 | 25 | 59 100 |
| Digital Telecom Phils Inc. | 0.66 | 0.68 | 0.66 | 0 68 | 140,000 |
| Globe Telecom Inc. | 795 | 800 | 790 | 800 | 154.800 |
| Ipeople Inc. | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0 98 | 30,000 |
| Island Info and Tech Inc. | 0.044 | 0.044 | 0.044 | 0.044 | 1,000,000 |
| ISM Communications Corp. | 0.041 | 0.041 | 0.04 | 0.041 | 1,800,000 |
| Liberty Telecoms Holdings | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 100,000 |
| Pilipino Tel. Corp. | 0.87 | 0.88 | 0.86 | 0.88 | 14,110,000 |
| Transpacific Broadcast | 1.38 | 1.42 | 1.38 | 1.38 | 87,000 |
| Phil. Long Dis Tel Co. | 900 | 915 | 900 | 900 | 143,120 |
| Philweb Corp. | 0.011 | 0 011 | 0.01 | 0.011 | 19,600,000 |
| POWER & ENERGY | | | | | |
| Manila Electric Co. A | 15 | 15.25 | 14.75 | 14.75 | 238,700 |
| Manila Electric Co. B | 24.5 | 24.5 | 24 | 24.25 | 4,370,600 |
| Petron Corp. | 2 22 | 2 22 | 2.18 | 2.2 | 1,577,000 |
| TRANSPORTATION SERVICES | | | | | |
| Int'l Container Term'l Sv | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 379,000 |
| Keppel Phils. Marine Inc. | 0.28 | 0 28 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 70,000 |
| CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS | | | | | |
| Engineering Equip. Inc. | 0.32 | 0.38 | 0 32 | 0.38 | 5,980,000 |
| Union Cement Corp. | 1 04 | 1 04 | 1.04 | 1.04 | 4,000 |
| FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO | | | | | |
| Jollibee Foods Corp. | 16.75 | 16 75 | 16.75 | 16.75 | 40,800 |
| RFM Corp. | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 50,000 |
| San Miguel Corp. A | 54.5 | 54 5 | 54 | 54.5 | 33,300 |
| San Miguel Corp. B | 63 | 63.5 | 63 | 63 5 | 24,700 |
| Vitarich Corp. | 0 26 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 300,000 |
| HOLDING FIRMS | | | | | |
| Ayala Corp. | 5.2 | 5.2 | 5 | 5 | 24,708,000 |
| Aboitiz Equity Ventures | 3.15 | 3.25 | 3.15 | 3.25 | 502,000 |
| Ajo.Net Holdings Inc. | 0.025 | 0.025 | 0.025 | 0.025 | 1,700,000 |
| Alcorn Gold Res. Corp. | 0.006 | 0.006 | 0.006 | 0.006 | 2,000,000 |
| Anglo Phil Holdings Corp. | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 10,000 |
| ATN Holdings Inc. | 1.74 | 1.74 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 25,000 |
| Baguio Gold Holdings Corp. | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.31 | 10,000 |
| Benpres Holdings Corp. | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.47 | 0.47 | 2,340,000 |
| Basic Consolidated Inc. | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 90,000 |
| Crown Equities Inc. | 0.19 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 300,000 |
| Southeast Asian Cement | 0.044 | 0.045 | 0.044 | 0.045 | 900,000 |
| DMCI Holdings Inc. | 0.27 | 0.28 | 0.27 | 0.28 | 500,000 |
| First Phil Hldgs Corp. | 18.75 | 18.75 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 233,400 |
| Global Equities Inc. | 0.065 | 0.07 | 0.0625 | 0.0625 | 1,800,000 |
| J.G. Summit Holdings Inc. | 1.98 | 1.98 | 1.98 | 1.98 | 64,000 |
| Megaworld Corp. | 1.06 | 1.06 | 1 06 | 1.06 | 212,000 |
| Metro Pacific Corp. | 0.28 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 670,000 |
| Music Corp. | 0.36 | 0 36 | 0 35 | 0.35 | 580,000 |
| MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING | | | | | |
| Pryce Corp. | 0 3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 450,000 |
| Steniel Manufacturing | 0 15 | 0 15 | 0 15 | 0.15 | 330,000 |
| HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES | | | | | |
| Belle Corp. | 0.55 | 0.55 | 0.55 | 0.55 | 150,000 |
| Fairmont Holdings Inc. | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.23 | 720,000 |
| Mondragon Intl Phils Inc. | 0.17 | 0.17 | 0.17 | 0.17 | 150,000 |
| Philippine Racing Club | 3.8 | 3 8 | 3 8 | 3.8 | 4,000 |
| BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr) | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 203,300 |
| PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 700 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y | 10.5 | 10 5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 1,200 |
| PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa | 10 5 | 10 5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 800 |
| PROPERTY | | | | | |
| Ayala Land Inc. | 5.8 | 5.8 | 5.7 | 5.8 | 7,012,000 |
| Araneta Properties Inc. | 0.205 | 0.205 | 0.205 | 0.205 | 280,000 |
| Cityland Development Corp. | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1,000 |
| Empire East Land Inc | 0.215 | 0.215 | 0.215 | 0.215 | 3,750,000 |
| Filinvest Land Inc. | 1.06 | 1.06 | 1.04 | 1.06 | 3,552,000 |
| SM Development Corp. | 1.1 | 1 1 | 1.08 | 1.08 | 57,000 |
| SM Prime Holdings Inc | 6.4 | 6 5 | 6.3 | 6.4 | 2,260,000 |
| MINING | | | | | |
| Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.225 | 0.225 | 1,510,000 |
| Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 850,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. A | 0.0075 | 0.0075 | 0.0075 | 0.0075 | 7,000,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. B | 0.008 | 0 008 | 0.008 | 0.008 | 1,000,000 |
| OIL | | | | | |
| Imperial Res. | 0.012 | 0.012 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 10,000,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. A | 0.0032 | 0.0032 | 0.003 | 0.003 | 483,000,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. B | 0.0032 | 0.0032 | 0.003 | 0.003 | 139,000,000 |

# 11-month BOP surplus hits $185M

THE COUNTRY'S balance-of-payments posted a surplus of $26 million in November, bringing the 11-month BOP surplus to $185 million, data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

The BOP position remained in the black in November after the national government raised additional $250 million through the flotation of $1.05 billion worth of long-term bonds in October.

The November BOP surplus this year was, however, lower than the $152 million registered in the same month last year. The 11-month of $185 million this year was also lower than the $564 million in the same period last year.

Foreign borrowings have been propping up the BOP lately. In October, the surplus of $942 million wiped out the deficit in the previous months and brought the 10-month BOP to a surplus of $159 million.

A BOP surplus should help improve the peso as it indicates that the inflow of dollars was more than the outflow.

The BOP indicates the country's ability to settle its obligations and is influenced by two items—current account that reflects trade movement and the capital and financial account, which mirrors the flow of investment and borrowings. *Clarissa S. Batino*

## DISCLOSURES

**FAR Eastern University** declared a cash dividend of P8 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Jan. 9 and will be payable on Jan. 19.

***

ELECTED directors of **Boulevard Holdings Inc.** were Jose Marcel Panlilio, Lorenzo Tañada III, Nicole Morris, Alfredo Joaquin, Mario Cristobal, Reynaldo Maulit, Francis Patron, Emmanuel Lopez-Dee and Antero Jose Caganda.

***

**MAGNUM Holdings Inc.** will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Dec. 19, 3 p.m. at Unit 3C Cypress Gardens Condominium, Legaspi Village, Makati City. Record date is on Nov. 25.

***

**ABOITIZ Equity Ventures Inc.** will sell its 50,000 shares in Mindanao Container Company for P26.95 million.

***

OSCAR Hilado was elected chair of **Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.** following the resignation of Ramon del Rosario Sr. who was appointed chair emeritus. Ramon del Rosario Jr. was elected vice chair and president of the company while Roberto Lavina was elected director to fill up the vacancy in the board. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

## CURRENCIES

| December 15, 2003<br>Country | Unit | Euro Equivalent | Dollar Equivalent | Peso Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Dollar | 0.813471081 | 1.000000 | 55.464000 |
| Japan | Yen | 0.007552 | 0.009284 | 0.514900 |
| United Kingdom | Pound | 1.421215 | 1.747100 | 96.901200 |
| Hongkong | Dollar | 0.104792 | 0.128821 | 7.144900 |
| Switzerland | Franc | 0.644844 | 0.792707 | 43.966700 |
| Canada | Dollar | 0.618092 | 0.759821 | 42.142700 |
| Singapore | Dollar | 0.476411 | 0.585652 | 32.482600 |
| Australia | Dollar | 0.603913 | 0.742390 | 41.175900 |
| Bahrain | Dinar* | 2.157805 | 2.652590 | 147.123300 |
| Saudi Arabia | Rial | 0.216926 | 0.266667 | 14.790400 |
| Brunei | Dollar | 0.47502 | 0.583942 | 32.387800 |
| Indonesia | Rupiah | 0.000096 | 0.000118 | 0.006500 |
| Thailand | Baht | 0.020547 | 0.025259 | 1.401000 |
| UAE | Dirham | 0.221498 | 0.272287 | 15.102100 |
| Euro | Euro | 1 | 1.229300 | 68.181900 |
| Argentina | Peso | 0.275286 | 0.338409 | 18.769500 |
| Brazil | REAL | 0.276503 | 0.339905 | 18.852500 |
| Denmark | Kroner | 0.134411 | 0.165232 | 9.164400 |
| India | Rupee | 0.01787 | 0.021968 | 1.218400 |
| Malaysia | Ringgit | 0.2141 | 0.263193 | 14.597700 |
| Mexico | New Peso | 0.072409 | 0.089012 | 4.937000 |
| New Zealand | Dollar | 0.526893 | 0.647710 | 35.924600 |
| Norway | Kroner | 0.1221 | 0.150098 | 8.325000 |
| Pakistan | Rupee | 0.014251 | 0.017519 | [illegible] |
| South Africa | Rand | 0.127957 | 0.157297 | [illegible] |
| Korea | Won | 0.000687 | 0.000844 | 0.0468[illegible] |
| Sweden | Kroner | 0.111585 | 0.137172 | 7.608100 |
| Syria | Pound | 0.018538 | 0.022789 | 1.264000 |
| Taiwan | Nt Dollar | 0.023961 | 0.029455 | 1.633700 |
| Venezuela | Bolivar | 0.00051 | 0.000627 | 0.034800 |

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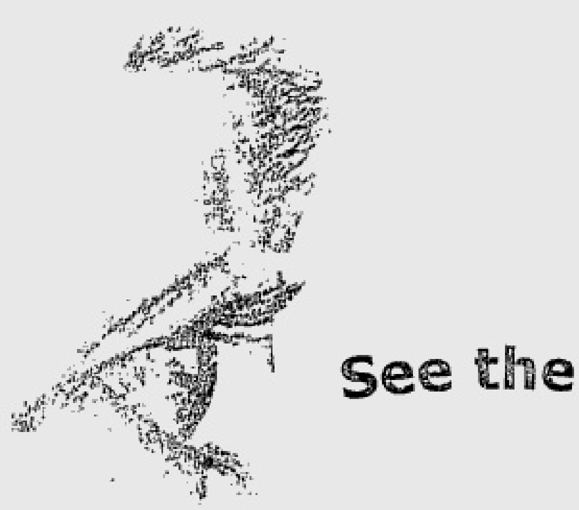
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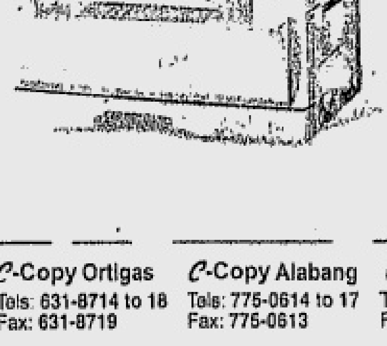

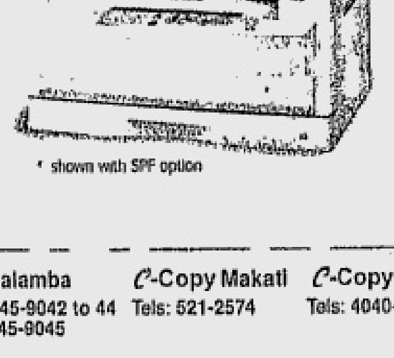

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### OCTOBER SURVEY

# Jobless rate eases to 10.1%

**By Doris C. Dumlao**

JOBLESS Filipinos accounted for 10.1 percent of the country's labor force as of October this year, barely improving from the 10.2 percent rate a year ago, due to insufficient opportunities especially for the younger population.

The unemployment rate, however, eased from the 12.6 percent reported in July this year, according to the latest quarterly labor force survey released by the National Statistics Office yesterday.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri assured, however, that domestic job opportunities would improve by next year.

"The Philippines is likely to see more jobs generated this quarter and in 2004, particularly in the agriculture and the information technology sectors," Neri said. "Labor market conditions are expected to improve in the fourth quarter of 2003 and in 2004 as the economy strengthens further."

Based on head count, the unemployed increased to 3.6 million in October from 3.4 million a year ago but declined compared to the 4.4 million recorded in the July survey.

"The jobless are still growing in absolute terms. I guess the number of jobs being created is not enough to meet the growing demand for work. In short, the situation in the labor sector did not improve," AB Capital Securities economist Jose Vistan said.

The country's total labor force stood at 35.08 million in October, up from 33.67 million a year ago.

Almost half of the unemployed, or about 45 percent, consisted of young people aged 15 to 24 years. A quarter represented those aged 25 to 34 years while the remaining 29.4 percent were those aged 35 years and above.

Of the 3.6 million unemployed Filipinos, 61.2 percent were males while 38.8 percent were females.

Based on the NSO's survey, the level of educational attainment was a big factor in securing a job. Those who completed a college degree had a much better chance to gain employment compared to those with lower educational attainment.

Only 17.9 percent of the unemployed were college graduates. On the other hand, 41.9 percent completed at least one year or high school education while 20.3 percent reached only the elementary level.

# Relocation problem delays Southrail rehabilitation plan

**By Abigail L. Ho**

THE REHABILITATION and modernization of the Philippine National Railways south commuter line (Southrail) cannot be fully implemented for at least the next two years as informal settlers on the site have yet to be relocated.

While PNR has signed a $100-million agreement with the Korean government to fund the project, Transportation Undersecretary Jose Cortes Jr. said this did not include the cost of relocating settlers that now occupied the site.

He said the government needed at least P6 billion to relocate all informal dwellers occupying the site of the Southrail and its counterpart in the north, the Manila-Clark Rapid Railway System (Northrail).

"The problem is really the relocation of the squatters. They continue to grow in number. Another problem is the local government. They won't let us transfer the settlers because these are their voters," he said.

Some relocation has already been done by the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council a few months ago, but this was not enough to totally clean up the site.

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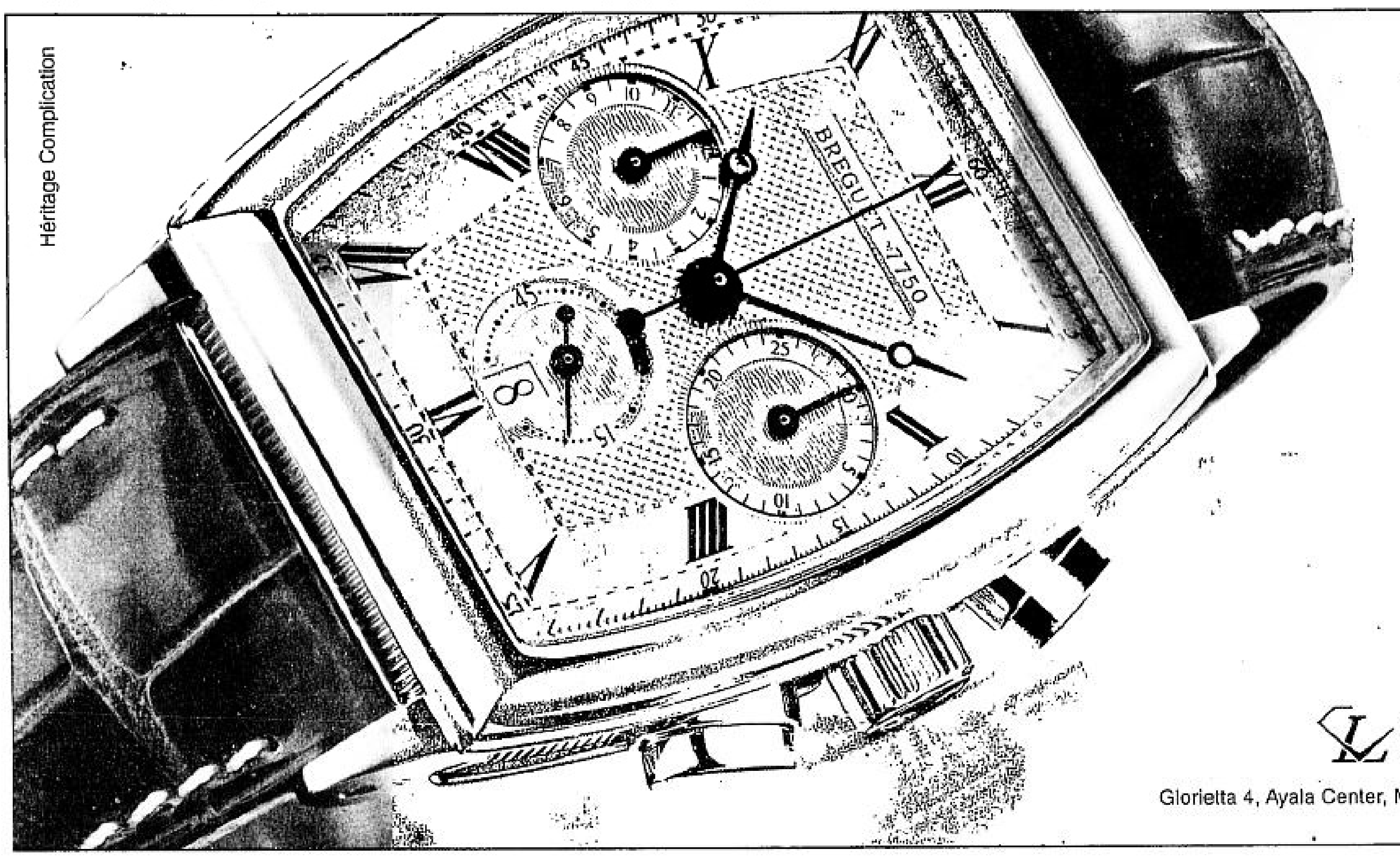

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# Tariff hike seen generating ₱1.5B for gov't

**By Michelle V. Remo**

THE GOVERNMENT expects to generate some P1.5 billion in additional revenue yearly from the recent increase in tariffs on selected raw materials and intermediate products, the Department of Trade and Industry said.

The additional revenue is on top of the expected P1.3 billion to be generated from the increase in tariffs on chosen finished products, which took effect last October following the issuance of an executive order by Malacañang.

The Department of Trade and Industry said Malacañang has already approved recently the increase in tariffs on selected raw materials and intermediate products after the endorsement by the Cabinet-level Tariff and Related Matters Committee.

The increase will officially take effect upon issuance of a separate executive order, which is expected anytime during the congressional break from Dec. 20 to Jan. 11.

The P1.5 billion in additional revenue also include duties to be collected from imported vegetables, whose tariffs were also increased.

The government ordered in May a temporary increase in the tariffs on imported agricultural products. The higher tariffs were made permanent after the order lapsed last month.

The increase in the tariffs on selected raw materials and intermediate products covers 627 imported product lines that do not compete with locally produced goods. It is aimed at protecting local industries from the adverse effects of increased importation.

The increase in tariffs was a result of the recent review conducted by the Tariff and Related Matters committee of the country's MFN (most-favored nations) tariff rates, or those imposed on products coming from countries outside the Asean region.

The move to realign the country's tariff rates followed the clamor from various local industries that had claimed to be badly hurt by the low tariff environment.

The tariff review covered over 4,000 product lines, of which 3,672 will be kept at present levels while 258 will be subject to reduction.

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Republic of the Philippines
**ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT**
Pilar St., Zamboanga City

**INVITATION TO BID**

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT (ZCWD) is inviting interested Licensed Suppliers of PVC Pipes and Bends, G.I. Pipes, C.I. Fittings and Angle Meter Valves to submit bids for the following:

| PR/JO NO. | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| 7025 | PVC Pipes and Bends for Stock Replenishment at the Property Section.<br>Approved Budget Cost : P785,160.00 |
| 7032 | G.I. Pipes and C.I. Air Release Valves for Stock at the Property Section.<br>Approved Budget Cost: P1,731,096.00 |
| 7030 | C.I. Fittings for 3rd Quarter 2003 use by the CMD. Carried in Stock.<br>Approved Budget Cost : P779,800.00 |
| 7109 | Angle Meter Valves for New Tapping Connection use by the Concessionaires and rehabilitation and clustering projects use by the CMD.<br>Approved Budget Cost : P1,495,000.00 |

Interested Licensed Suppliers may obtain *Bid Forms and Detailed Specifications* at the BAC Secretariat, 2/F ZCWD Main Bldg., Pilar Street, Zamboanga City after payment of a minimal non-refundable fee of P250.00 for each PR.

Submission of Bids : December 22, 2003
2:00 PM AT THE 2/F, ZCWD MAIN BLDG.,
PILAR ST., ZAMBOANGA CITY

The ZCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive minor informalities in the bid received and to award the contract to the supplier whose bid, as evaluated by the BAC 1, is the most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ARNULFO A. ALFONSO
BAC 1 Chairman

(PDI – December 16, 2003)

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# PSE to reimpose transaction fees in Jan.

**By Doris C. Dumlao**

THE NEWLY listed Philippine Stock Exchange is set to reimpose transaction fees—a key source of revenue that was shelved in 1995—starting January in order to boost its sagging cash flow.

However, some brokers said the fees on buy and sell orders might only be passed on to clients as the industry was no longer in a position to assume the cost.

The transaction fee is equivalent to 0.5 basis point for each buy or sell order. This means that for every P500 million value turnover on the PSE in a single day, the exchange can generate an incremental income of P50,000 from buy and sell transactions.

PSE president Ernest Leung said the exchange could generate between P6 million and P12 million in additional annual revenue. This assumed an average daily market volume of between P250 million and P500 million.

Leung said the transaction fees were suspended in 1995 as the brokers wanted to reap the fruits of huge market volumes. At that time, the stock market was at its peak and the PSE could afford to waive earnings from such fees.

Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Roxas said the transaction fees should not have been suspended from the very start so that the PSE could have beef up its finances to cover for lean times. At that time, the cost of the transaction fees was assumed by the brokers.

Another broker said that this time, the industry might have to pass on the cost to clients as it was already shouldering a lot of expenses in view of the market downturn. The broker noted that the industry was now paying for contributions to the Securities Clearing Corp. of the Philippines, Philippine Central Depository Inc. and even PSE Foundation Inc.

To date, listing fees comprise the bulk of the PSE's earnings. As this revenue source dried up in the past years, the exchange has relied on earnings from its fixed income investments.

During the first nine months of this year, the PSE incurred a net loss of P300,000, a reversal of the P28 million in net profit in 2002 and P18.3 million in 2001.

The PSE, which has shed off its mutual status and converted into a stock corporation, is building a sustainable business model to make its shares attractive to investors. It started the public trading of its shares yesterday, but has yet to make an initial public offering.

The Securities Regulation Code, however, requires the dilution of shares held by the brokerage industry from 100 percent to only 20 percent.

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**NOTICE TO MANILA WATER CUSTOMERS AND THE PUBLIC**
**WATER TARIFF FOR THE EAST ZONE**

Effective January 1, 2004, Manila Water Company, Inc. will carry out a 3.4% CPI Adjustment and a Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA) of 1.58% of basic charge as approved by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office in its Resolution No. 03-036-CA dated 8 December 2003, as confirmed by the MWSS Board Resolution No. 391-2003 dated Dec. 11, 2003.

The FCDA will be computed quarterly depending on the fluctuations of the exchange rate.

Manila Water Company, the East Zone concessionaire, covers the following areas:

Manila (San Andres and Sta. Ana only); Quezon City (east of San Juan River, West Avenue, EDSA, Congressional and Mindanao Ave., Districts of Tandang Sora, Pasong Tamo and Matandang Balara), Makati City (east of South Super Highway), Mandaluyong City, San Juan, Marikina City, Pasig City, Pateros, Taguig, - all in Metro Manila; Rizal Province.

The new schedule of water tariff is as follows:

Manila Water

MANILA WATER COMPANY, INC.
WATER TARIFF FOR THE EAST ZONE
Effective January 1, 2004

1. Water Charge (peso per cubic meter)

| | | Tariff effective until December 31, 2003 | | | | Tariff effective 1 January 2004 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | A. Basic | B. CERA* | C. FCDA | TOTAL | A. Basic | B. CERA* | C. FCDA (1.58% of Basic) | TOTAL |
| RESIDENTIAL | | | | | | | | | |
| First | 10 cu.m. | 33.81 /Conn. | *10.00 /Conn. | 1.38 /Conn. | 45.19 /Conn. | 34.96 /Conn. | *10.00 /Conn. | 0.55 /Conn. | 45.51 /Conn. |
| Next | 10 cu.m. | 4.13 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.17 /Cu.m. | 5.30 /Cu.m. | 4.27 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.07 /Cu.m. | 5.34 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 20 cu.m. | 7.82 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.32 /Cu.m. | 9.14 /Cu.m. | 8.09 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.13 /Cu.m. | 9.22 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 20 cu.m. | 10.30 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.42 /Cu.m. | 11.72 /Cu.m. | 10.65 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.17 /Cu.m. | 11.82 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 20 cu.m. | 12.04 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.49 /Cu.m. | 13.53 /Cu.m. | 12.45 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.20 /Cu.m. | 13.64 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 20 cu.m. | 12.60 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.52 /Cu.m. | 14.12 /Cu.m. | 13.03 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.21 /Cu.m. | 14.24 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 50 cu.m. | 13.17 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.54 /Cu.m. | 14.71 /Cu.m. | 13.62 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.22 /Cu.m. | 14.83 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 50 cu.m. | 13.73 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.56 /Cu.m. | 15.29 /Cu.m. | 14.20 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.22 /Cu.m. | 15.42 /Cu.m. |
| Over | 200 cu.m. | 14.30 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.58 /Cu.m. | 15.88 /Cu.m. | 14.78 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.23 /Cu.m. | 16.02 /Cu.m. |
| SEMI-BUSINESS | | | | | | | | | |
| First | 10 cu.m. | 56.76 /Conn. | *10.00 /Conn. | 2.32 /Conn. | 69.08 /Conn. | 58.69 /Conn. | *10.00 /Conn. | 0.93 /Conn. | 69.61 /Conn. |
| Next | 10 cu.m. | 6.91 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 8.19 /Cu.m. | 7.14 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.11 /Cu.m. | 8.26 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 20 cu.m. | 8.52 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.35 /Cu.m. | 9.87 /Cu.m. | 8.81 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.14 /Cu.m. | 9.95 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 20 cu.m. | 10.82 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.44 /Cu.m. | 12.26 /Cu.m. | 11.19 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.18 /Cu.m. | 12.37 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 20 cu.m. | 12.60 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.52 /Cu.m. | 14.12 /Cu.m. | 13.03 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.21 /Cu.m. | 14.24 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 20 cu.m. | 13.17 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.54 /Cu.m. | 14.71 /Cu.m. | 13.62 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.22 /Cu.m. | 14.83 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 50 cu.m. | 13.73 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.56 /Cu.m. | 15.29 /Cu.m. | 14.20 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.22 /Cu.m. | 15.42 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 50 cu.m. | 14.30 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.58 /Cu.m. | 15.88 /Cu.m. | 14.78 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.23 /Cu.m. | 16.02 /Cu.m. |
| Over | 200 cu.m. | 14.91 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.61 /Cu.m. | 16.52 /Cu.m. | 15.41 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.24 /Cu.m. | 16.66 /Cu.m. |
| BUSINESS GROUP I | | | | | | | | | |
| First | 10 cu.m. | 153.67 /Conn. | *10.00 /Conn. | 0.29 /Conn. | 163.96 /Conn. | 158.89 /Conn. | *10.00 /Conn. | 2.51 /Conn. | 171.40 /Conn. |
| Next | 90 cu.m. | 15.38 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.63 /Cu.m. | 17.01 /Cu.m. | 15.91 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.25 /Cu.m. | 17.16 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 15.47 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.63 /Cu.m. | 17.10 /Cu.m. | 16.00 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.25 /Cu.m. | 17.25 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 15.51 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.63 /Cu.m. | 17.15 /Cu.m. | 16.04 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.25 /Cu.m. | 17.30 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 15.56 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.64 /Cu.m. | 17.19 /Cu.m. | 16.09 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.25 /Cu.m. | 17.34 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 15.64 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.64 /Cu.m. | 17.28 /Cu.m. | 16.18 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.43 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 15.69 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.64 /Cu.m. | 17.33 /Cu.m. | 16.22 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.48 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 15.73 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.64 /Cu.m. | 17.38 /Cu.m. | 16.27 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.52 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 15.82 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.65 /Cu.m. | 17.47 /Cu.m. | 16.36 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.62 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 15.86 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.65 /Cu.m. | 17.51 /Cu.m. | 16.40 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.66 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 15.91 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.65 /Cu.m. | 17.56 /Cu.m. | 16.45 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.71 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 15.99 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.66 /Cu.m. | 17.65 /Cu.m. | 16.54 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.80 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 16.04 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.66 /Cu.m. | 17.69 /Cu.m. | 16.58 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.84 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 16.08 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.66 /Cu.m. | 17.74 /Cu.m. | 16.63 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.89 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 16.17 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.66 /Cu.m. | 17.83 /Cu.m. | 16.72 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 17.98 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 16.21 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.66 /Cu.m. | 17.87 /Cu.m. | 16.76 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.26 /Cu.m. | 18.03 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.25 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.66 /Cu.m. | 17.92 /Cu.m. | 16.81 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.07 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.34 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.67 /Cu.m. | 18.01 /Cu.m. | 16.90 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.16 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.38 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.67 /Cu.m. | 18.05 /Cu.m. | 16.94 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.21 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.43 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.67 /Cu.m. | 18.10 /Cu.m. | 16.99 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.25 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.51 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.68 /Cu.m. | 18.19 /Cu.m. | 17.08 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.35 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.56 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.68 /Cu.m. | 18.23 /Cu.m. | 17.12 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.39 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.60 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.68 /Cu.m. | 18.28 /Cu.m. | 17.17 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.44 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.69 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.68 /Cu.m. | 18.37 /Cu.m. | 17.26 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.53 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.73 /Conn. | 1.00 /Conn. | 0.68 /Conn. | 18.42 /Conn. | 17.30 /Conn. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.57 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.77 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.69 /Cu.m. | 18.46 /Cu.m. | 17.35 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.62 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.82 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.69 /Cu.m. | 18.51 /Cu.m. | 17.39 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.66 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.91 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.69 /Cu.m. | 18.60 /Cu.m. | 17.48 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 18.76 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.95 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.69 /Cu.m. | 18.64 /Cu.m. | 17.52 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 18.80 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 16.99 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.69 /Cu.m. | 18.68 /Cu.m. | 17.57 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 18.85 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 17.08 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.70 /Cu.m. | 18.78 /Cu.m. | 17.66 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 18.94 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 17.12 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.70 /Cu.m. | 18.82 /Cu.m. | 17.70 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 18.98 /Cu.m. |
| Over | 10000 cu.m. | 17.17 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.70 /Cu.m. | 18.87 /Cu.m. | 17.75 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 19.03 /Cu.m. |
| BUSINESS GROUP II | | | | | | | | | |
| First | 10 cu.m. | 172.27 /Conn. | *10.00 /Conn. | 0.80 /Conn. | 183.07 /Conn. | 171.92 /Conn. | *10.00 /Conn. | 2.72 /Conn. | 184.64 /Conn. |
| Next | 90 cu.m. | 16.73 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.68 /Cu.m. | 18.42 /Cu.m. | 17.30 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.57 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 16.82 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.69 /Cu.m. | 18.51 /Cu.m. | 17.39 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.27 /Cu.m. | 18.66 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 16.95 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.69 /Cu.m. | 18.64 /Cu.m. | 17.52 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 18.80 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 17.08 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.70 /Cu.m. | 18.78 /Cu.m. | 17.66 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 18.94 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 17.17 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.70 /Cu.m. | 18.87 /Cu.m. | 17.75 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 19.03 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 17.30 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.71 /Cu.m. | 19.00 /Cu.m. | 17.88 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 19.17 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 17.43 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.71 /Cu.m. | 19.14 /Cu.m. | 18.02 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.28 /Cu.m. | 19.30 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 17.51 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.72 /Cu.m. | 19.23 /Cu.m. | 18.11 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.29 /Cu.m. | 19.40 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 17.64 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.72 /Cu.m. | 19.37 /Cu.m. | 18.24 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.29 /Cu.m. | 19.53 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 100 cu.m. | 17.77 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.73 /Cu.m. | 19.50 /Cu.m. | 18.38 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.29 /Cu.m. | 19.67 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 17.86 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.73 /Cu.m. | 19.59 /Cu.m. | 18.47 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.29 /Cu.m. | 19.76 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 17.99 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.74 /Cu.m. | 19.73 /Cu.m. | 18.60 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.29 /Cu.m. | 19.90 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 18.08 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.74 /Cu.m. | 19.82 /Cu.m. | 18.69 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.30 /Cu.m. | 19.99 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 18.21 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.74 /Cu.m. | 19.96 /Cu.m. | 18.83 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.30 /Cu.m. | 20.13 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 200 cu.m. | 18.34 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.75 /Cu.m. | 20.09 /Cu.m. | 18.96 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.30 /Cu.m. | 20.26 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 18.43 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.75 /Cu.m. | 20.18 /Cu.m. | 19.05 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.30 /Cu.m. | 20.35 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 18.56 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.76 /Cu.m. | 20.32 /Cu.m. | 19.19 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.30 /Cu.m. | 20.49 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 18.69 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.76 /Cu.m. | 20.45 /Cu.m. | 19.32 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.31 /Cu.m. | 20.63 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 18.77 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.77 /Cu.m. | 20.54 /Cu.m. | 19.41 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.31 /Cu.m. | 20.72 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 18.90 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.77 /Cu.m. | 20.68 /Cu.m. | 19.55 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.31 /Cu.m. | 20.86 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 19.03 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.78 /Cu.m. | 20.81 /Cu.m. | 19.68 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.31 /Cu.m. | 20.99 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 19.12 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.78 /Cu.m. | 20.90 /Cu.m. | 19.77 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.31 /Cu.m. | 21.08 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 19.25 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.79 /Cu.m. | 21.04 /Cu.m. | 19.91 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.31 /Cu.m. | 21.22 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 19.38 /Conn. | 1.00 /Conn. | 0.79 /Conn. | 21.18 /Conn. | 20.04 /Conn. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.32 /Cu.m. | 21.36 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 19.47 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.80 /Cu.m. | 21.27 /Cu.m. | 20.13 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.32 /Cu.m. | 21.45 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 19.60 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.80 /Cu.m. | 21.40 /Cu.m. | 20.27 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.32 /Cu.m. | 21.59 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 19.69 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.81 /Cu.m. | 21.49 /Cu.m. | 20.36 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.32 /Cu.m. | 21.68 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 19.82 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.81 /Cu.m. | 21.63 /Cu.m. | 20.49 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.32 /Cu.m. | 21.81 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 19.95 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.82 /Cu.m. | 21.76 /Cu.m. | 20.63 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.33 /Cu.m. | 21.95 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 20.03 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.82 /Cu.m. | 21.85 /Cu.m. | 20.72 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.33 /Cu.m. | 22.04 /Cu.m. |
| Next | 500 cu.m. | 20.16 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.82 /Cu.m. | 21.99 /Cu.m. | 20.85 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.33 /Cu.m. | 22.18 /Cu.m. |
| Over | 1000 cu.m. | 20.29 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.83 /Cu.m. | 22.13 /Cu.m. | 20.99 /Cu.m. | 1.00 /Cu.m. | 0.33 /Cu.m. | 22.32 /Cu.m. |

* Shall be subject to actual consumption of P1.00 per cubic meter if consumption is below ten (10) cubic meters.

2. A. Environmental Charge (EC)
10% of Water Charge

B. Sewerage Charge (SC)
50% of the Water Charge for all customers connected to the MWCI sewerlines

3. Maintenance Service Charge (MSC)

| Meter Size | Amount (Peso/conn.) |
|---|---|
| 1/2" or 13mm | 1.50 |
| 3/4" or 20mm | 2.00 |
| 1" or 25mm | 3.00 |

| Meter Size | Amount (Peso/conn.) |
|---|---|
| 11/4" or 40mm | 4.00 |
| 2" or 50mm | 6.00 |
| 3" or 75mm | 10.00 |

| Meter Size | Amount (Peso/conn.) |
|---|---|
| 4" or 100mm | 20.00 |
| 6" or 150mm | 35.00 |
| 8" or 200mm | 50.00 |

4. Value Added Tax (VAT) 10% for the charges 1, 2 and 3

The Monthly Bill is the sum of 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Approved by:

EDUARDO C. SANTOS
Chief Regulator

ORLANDO C. HONDRADE
MWSS Administrator

ANTONINO T. AQUINO
MWCI - President

*For further inquiries you may visit the nearest Branch Office or call up Manila Water Company Hotline at 1627*

Manila Water

**Notice to its Customers**

**Water Tariff rates will increase less than 1% in 2004 due to inflation and Peso devaluation**

- The adjustment is allowed in the 1997 MWSS-MWCI Concession Agreement.
- The increase in water bill will only be 2 pesos per month for average residential customer consuming 30 cubic meters per month.

**Manila Water achieved key milestones in 2003...**

- Expanded/rehabilitated 192 kms of distribution lines costing over P1.0 billion.
- Reduced non-revenue water (NRW) to 51% from 54% in 2002. This is significantly lower than 63% NRW in 1997.
- Provided affordable water to 240,000 population in low-income communities. Since 1997, we have provided water service to over 1 million additional population.

**Commitment to invest more and improve service...**

- Invest P19B to construct/rehabilitate 200 kms main per year over the period of 2004-2008
- Provide 24-hour water availability to 100% of its customers connected to the central distribution system
- Further reduce NRW and ensure water supply security by co-developing new water sources with MWSS.

**For further inquiries please call the Manila Water Company Hotline at 1627**

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## OFW ...

From page B1

vious year.

The improving global situation capped by the capture of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein should also lead to increased deployment in the future as it would encourage Filipinos anew to look for job opportunities in the Middle East, a region that was avoided in the first half when the US-Iraq war broke out.

The central bank had estimated that more than $5 billion in OFW remittances passing through informal channels like couriers and money-changers were not being tracked by the government.

The BSP said the major sources of remittances in the first 10 months were the United States, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates.

## Bearbull

From page B2

on all the leaders every day. It has also enabled me to study the risk factor in more detail and make good calls on the market.

I have been a trader for over 50 years, but it is a strenuous existence and at 74 next month, I have decided to call it a day. Instead, I want to go back to Fund Management, which I did for decades at what is now Credit Lyonnais in London. I will advise on investment portfolios of not less than P2 million, preferably P5 million. If you are interested, write to me at *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*.

I will have to employ a trader, who unfortunately insists on being paid, so as from next month, the subscription rate will double. Existing subscribers will not be affected as I promised them I would never increase their rate and most of them have become my friends.

Saddam was found with a false beard, a false set of teeth and a falsetto voice. He has asked to be imprisoned at Camp Crame.

# Dollar and stocks rise on Saddam capture

SINGAPORE—Asian stocks jumped, bonds fell and the dollar rose on Monday as markets celebrated the capture of Saddam Hussein, but any gains were expected to be fleeting as investors worried about global security and US deficits.

Former Iraqi President Saddam's capture by US troops late on Saturday saw crude prices fall more than a dollar as it raised the prospect of fewer sabotage attacks on Iraq's oil industry and a boost to world supplies.

Gold prices tumbled as the dollar rose, while Japanese stocks jumped more than 2 percent, boosted by exporters such as Toyota Motor Co.

Analysts said hopes for a shorter US occupation in Iraq would be a plus for the US economy and a psychological boost for the beleaguered dollar, but the impact was likely to be short-term given the rising US current account and budget deficits.

"At least for now, we should see a swifter-than-expected end to the US occupation in Iraq and that's welcome," said Kazunori Jinnai, general manager at Daiwa Securities SMBC.

US stocks were expected to enjoy a brief rally, with Nasdaq 100 futures up 26.5 points at 1,449.

"There will be some early applause from Wall Street, but it will be subdued because there is a long road ahead," said Hugh Johnson, chief investment officer at First Albany Corp. in New York. "It does not signal the end of terrorist attacks both around the world and in the United States."

Shares in Japan had risen 2.7 percent, Australia climbed 0.9 percent and South Korea was up 1.3 percent. Hong Kong was up 0.5 percent, while Singapore rose nearly one percent.

An MSCI index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan was up 0.6 percent at a three-year high.

The dollar, which has been weighed down by a huge current account deficit and security concerns in Iraq, was fetching 107.97 yen, compared with a three-year low of 106.74 yen hit last week and 107.80 yen in late New York trade on Friday.

The dollar was also up against the safe-haven Swiss franc at 1.2727 franc from 1.2621. Against the euro the dollar stood at $1.2208, after hitting a record low of $1.2306 on Friday.

Ten-year US Treasuries fell more than a half point to 99-17/32, pushing their yield to 4.31 percent from 4.24 percent in late US trade on Friday.

Japanese government bonds (JGBs) fell as stocks jumped, but declines were seen as limited as many traders remained skeptical over whether violence in Iraq would cease.

"Stocks went up and bonds fell as the initial reaction but I don't think this will continue," said Hiroyoshi Sandaya, an analyst at Goldman Sachs. "This effect may last only for today."

The yield on Japan's benchmark 256th 10-year cash bond was up six basis points at 1.355 percent.

Major US stock indexes have risen sharply since the start of US military operations in Iraq in March, propelled by signs of a reviving economy and higher corporate profits.

A rally on Wall Street on Monday could carry the blue-chip Dow Jones industrials to fresh 2003 highs above the key 10,000 mark, which it closed above on Thursday for the first time in nearly 19 months.

For the year, the Dow is up 20 percent, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq is up 46 percent.

In Asia, brokerages and exporters led markets higher, while oil stocks fell.

Japan's Fujitsu and Toyota each climbed more than 2 percent, while in Hong Kong, oil firms PetroChina and CNOOC each fell about 2 percent. South Korea's Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co. shot up by a daily limit of 15 percent on hopes that $1.1 billion owed by Iraq could be forthcoming.

US investors were expected to tread cautiously, looking at a New York regional manufacturing survey on Monday to see how well the sector's big rebound is doing in the year's final month.

*Reuters*

# Asian demand seen surging back in 2004

SINGAPORE—Rebounding Asian economies should see inflation making a modest return in 2004, signaling a revival of domestic demand, after years of falling prices across the region.

Once the sworn enemy of central banks globally, inflation bore the blame for the boom-bust swings of the 1970s and 1980s that hampered business planning, investment and policy-making.

But times have changed. Economists said Asian central banks would welcome the reemergence of moderate inflation as a sign their loose monetary stance was helping lift domestic demand.

Inflation would allow companies to pass on rising costs to consumers, and that in turn would encourage governments to boost the purchasing power of their citizens by letting their currencies strengthen.

"This recovery will have legs," said David Fernandez, JP Morgan Chase's head of emerging Asia research in Singapore.

"But on top of this is an event that I think is less emphasized, which is a return of a modicum of pricing power after a long stretch of time."

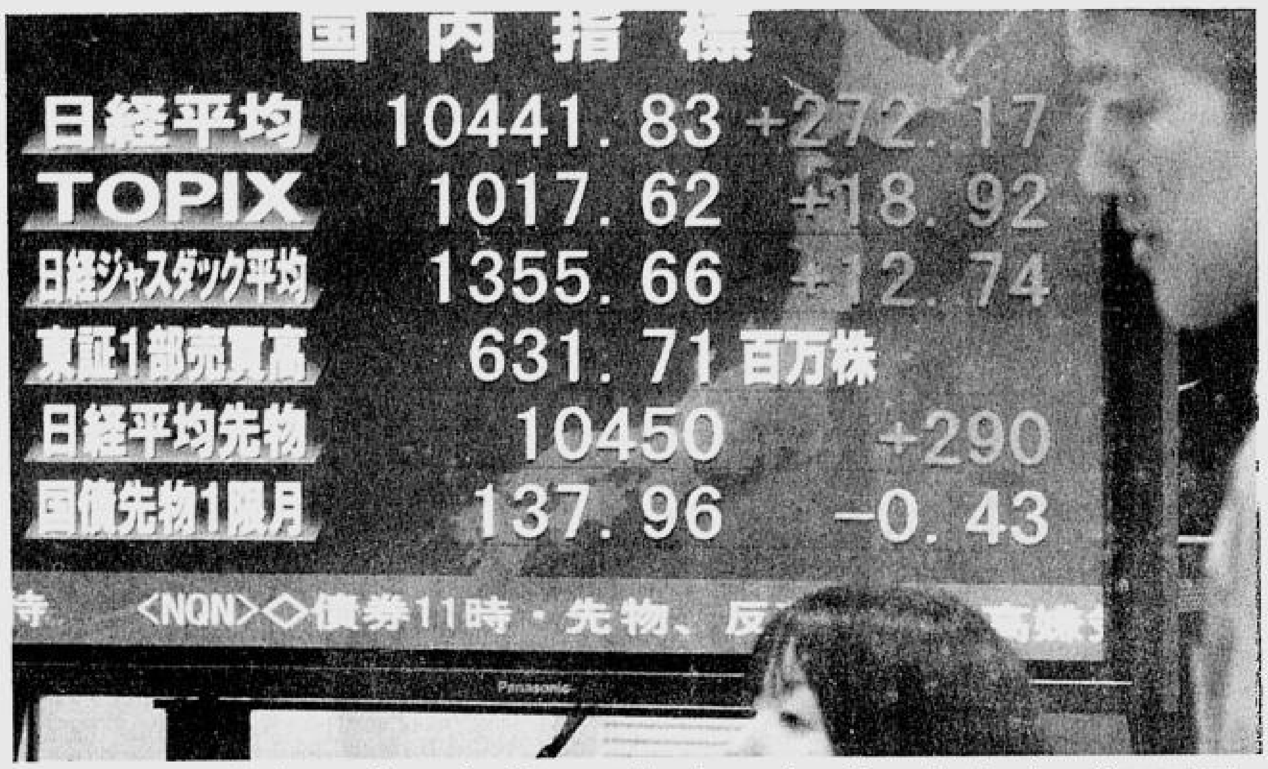
Fernandez was upbeat about the prospects for Asia's economies next year, a view shared by many others.

The Asian Development Bank and Morgan Stanley forecast 6.2 percent gross domestic product growth for 2004 in Asia outside of Japan.

Citigroup and JP Morgan were even more bullish, with estimates of 6.7 percent and 6.4 percent, respectively.

Expectations of faster growth hang on strong exports, boosted by a gathering recovery among major industrialized countries.

*Reuters*


国内指標
日経平均 10441.83 +272.17
TOPIX 1017.62 +18.92
日経ジャスダック平均 1355.66 +12.74
東証1部売買高 631.71 百万株
日経平均先物 10450 +290
国債先物1限月 137.96 −0.43
<NQN>◇債券11時・先物、反
Panasonic

**TOKYO'S** main stock index surged more than 2.6 percent Monday morning as the weekend capture of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein raised hopes that stability might soon return to the Middle Eastern country and the US dollar against the Japanese yen rose. AP

NOVEMBER FIGURES

# Investments in China down 40%

BEIJING—Foreign direct investment in China plunged nearly 40 percent in November from a year earlier to $3.6 billion, statistics showed Monday.

Actual foreign investment in the first 11 months increased 0.2 percent year-on-year to $47.15 billion, the Ministry of Commerce said on its website.

The ministry provided no explanation for the fall in November although analysts said the decline was related to a delayed impact from the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) that hit China earlier in the year.

In October, foreign direct investment plunged by more than 30 percent to $3.2 billion for the same reason.

Previous uncertainty about whether China would revalue its currency also stymied new investment, said Huang Yiping, economist at Citigroup.

"You'll probably see pretty strong flows early next year," Huang added.

Contracted foreign investment, a measure of possible business in the future, reached $11.82 billion in November, up 68.6 percent over the same month last year.

During the January-November period the value of contracted investment rose 37.08 percent annually to $100.5 billion, the ministry said.

*AFP*

# Thai Q3 GDP posts growth after SARS

BANGKOK—Thailand reported solid third-quarter economic growth on Monday, showing the country had shrugged off the effects of a global SARS outbreak earlier in the year to become one of the most robust economies in Asia.

The damage SARS inflicted on the Thai tourism industry was more than offset by resilient exports, which a state planning agency expects to rise a brisk 16 percent in 2003 after only 5.7 percent growth in 2002.

The agency said Thai gross domestic product had grown a healthy 2 percent in the third quarter of 2003 from the previous three months.

The third-quarter growth, the fastest in four years, was sharply higher than that of the second quarter, when SARS slowed expansion to just 0.9 percent from the previous quarter and 5.8 percent from a year earlier.

*Reuters*

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Galing
Pilipino
Movement

## Pasiklabin ang Galin

# Light a Christmas Tree fo

HERE'S a fun and unique way to celebrate a Pinoy Christmas. If you were to pick a color of a bulb to decorate a giant Christmas tree in Rizal Park, which color would you pick? There are red, green, yellow, blue and white bulbs to choose from.

However, it doesn't really matter what color of bulb you will choose and hang on the tree. The more important thing in picking a bulb is that you will make the Christmas of a needy individual a happy one when the bulbs light up all together on the night of December 16th.

The Galing Pilipino Movement, a non profit private-sector initiative that wants to inspire Filipinos to recognize, affirm and propagate what is good and excellent about being Filipino, has spearheaded "Light-A-Tree-for-Unity," a fund raising drive, not directly for its own cause, but for the benefit of five major causes using Christmas trees and light bulbs as the medium of donation.

Red bulbs will go to the Red Cross, green bulbs to Bantay Kalikasan, yellow bulbs to SOS Children's Villages Philippines, blue bulbs to ACDA's PeaceBuild Mindanao, and white bulbs to Care-Giving Centers for the Elderly. These 'donated' bulbs will be placed on corporate-sponsored Christmas trees to be displayed at the Luneta Park from December 16, 2003 to January 4, 2004.

According to Erly de Guzman, GPM Founder and President, the proje only help and unite the various cause-oriented groups, it will also highlight the unique and heart-warming Pilipino Christmas traditions and practices. After all, the Philippines claims to be the Christmas capital of the world for celebrating the season of gift giving longer.

She said the project also aims to encourage Pilipinos here and abroad to demonstrate a unity of spirit by singing the traditional Pilipino Christmas carol Pasko Na Naman at 7pm Manila time as the trees and bulbs are first lighted at the Luneta Park. This show of togetherness of the Filipinos as a race may help foster a stronger sense of national pride.

Six corporations have already agreed to sponsor Christmas trees bear ed colored bulbs. Chowking, Penshoppe, Cosmos, Splash, Roxas Gr Nielsen and Agora Awardees / GPM Trustees. De Guzman said they're s ing and inviting more companies and individuals to participate.

GPM Trustee Bernie Liu of Penshoppe encouraged his employees to p

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RED CROSS
COSMOS
SPLASH
BANTAY KALIKASAN
SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES
PENSHOPPE
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## Pamaskong Galin pasalamat sa maGaling

*Una sa lahat, sa mga naniwala at naki-isa sa projektong ito…*

1. **Penshoppe** - Despite a tough business situation, the company and its employees dug deep into their hearts to let the true spirit of a 'giving' Christmas come out. The result: sponsorship of a PGP tree for the SOS Children's Villages with over 800 bulbs donated by Penshoppe employees. Such 'galing' is the espirit d'corps in this Penshoppe family, they will be coming in force at the First Lighting ceremony tonight in outfits showing their 'yellow' bulb color.

2. **Cosmos** - Consistent with their 'Angat sa Iba' market positioning, Cosmos pledges support na - naiiiba. Not just a tree for Red

## Brighte give to

SOS means Save Our Souls. SOS Children's Villages founded by Hermann Gmeiner is an international child welfare organization providing long-term care for orphans and children in need.

SOS Children's Villages-Philippines has developed six villages for nearly 800 children throughout the Philippines.

The Philippine National Red Cross, a voluntary humanitarian organization, is dedicated to alleviating the suffering of everyone caught in conflicts or natural disasters, regardless of nationality, faith, political affiliation or economic standing. It assists the government by providing blood donations, community health, nursing and safety services, as well as disaster management.

Bantay Kalikasan is the environmental arm of the ABS support ment a governn

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YES, SALI
SAPAMAS!

FOUNDING TRUSTEES

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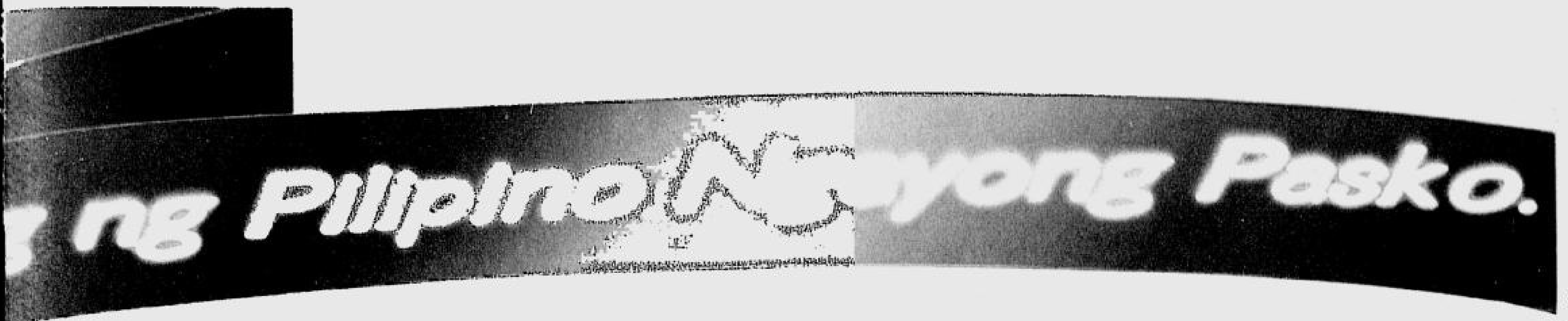
g ng Pilipino Ngayong Pasko.

# r Unity, *a Galing Pilipino way*

t will not

and donate a bulb and the tree they will decorate will represent the "family tree" of Penshoppe. While each PGP tree has about 300-400 bulbs, the Penshoppers raised 800 bulbs as of presstime.

The 20-feet-tall Christmas trees sponsored by these companies will be displayed at the Rizal Park from December 16, 2003 until January 4, 2004.

The tree, designed by the United Architects of the Philippines, is a simple giant triangular structure bearing the name of the company who sponsored the tree. Four hundred light bulbs will decorate each tree.

As many sponsors and donations pour in, more trees will be put up and will glow in front of the Quirino Grandstand, where a giant parol mounted by the Philippine Tourism Authority, will also be found amongst the glowing trees.

The lightning of the bulbs on December 16 will also be an event that will gather people who helped in the project. Kontra-Gapi, an ethnic musical ensemble, opens the program that starts at 6pm. The programs hits its first high note with Gary V rendering his Christmas testimony through his 'Take Me Out of the Dark' hit song. The Key of J Trumpets group renders Pasko Na Naman to mark the Galing Pilipino moment when the song will be sang in unison worldwide. Department of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon delivers an inspirational talk. Kumukutikutitap will usher in the First Lighting of the trees. UST's multi-awarded choir, UST Liturgicon, leads into a Prayer for the Nation and for World Peace. The evening peaks with versatile diva Dulce singing the tagalog version of " A Night of Miracles" that will bring in the fireworks of the night to make for a "Wow Galing!" experience.

De Guzman said the selection of cause-partners who will benefit from the light-a-tree project were narrowed down to the five groups who wanted to wanted with GPM. Each had a critical mass base and action oriented programs based on GPM ideals. The groups also have proven incorruptible delivery systems for defined target beneficiaries and are willing to partner with GPM.

The logo colors that identified them in the tree had "symbolic compatibility" too. For example, Red bulb for Red Cross, or Green bulb for Bantay Kalikasan.

"Filipinos have many reasons to say that Christmas in the Philippines has a particular charm," said De Guzman.

"Not only do we have the longest Christmas season. We probably have the highest gift-giving/ shopping per capita in the world and heartwarming traditions to celebrate Christmas. This season provides Filipinos with more opportunities to manifest the "Galing Filipino" spirit than at any other time of the year."

aling Pilipino Movement
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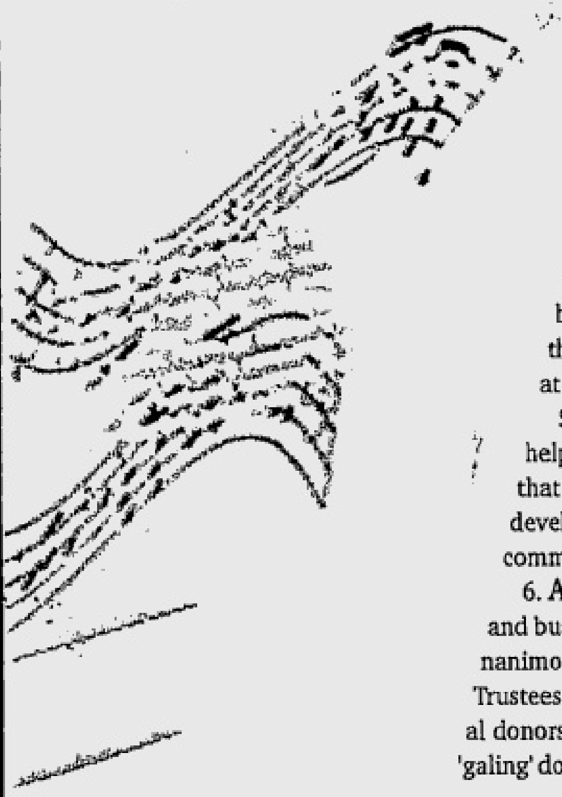
## g,

*Umawit Tayo*
December 16, 2003, 7pm Manila Time



Cross...but for the PGP guests at today's First Lighting at the Luneta Park, the longest reigning Pilipino softdrink, will provide the thirst quencher to Lapid's chicharon treats and binalot CPA (chicken pork adobo) delight.

3. Chowking - GPM's Monthly Kapihan host goes the extra mile farther by sponsoring a PGP Tree for Peace Build Mindanao. Mindful of its business presence in South Philippines, Chowking wants to make a meaningful contribution to community development there. That's in addition to their corporate practice of only serving 'halal' chicken for all its outlets.

4. **Splash** - Splash makes a Christmas splash by donating a PGP Tree for the Bantay Kalikasan cause. From a backyard operation with only PhP 100,000 in 1985, this mega-bucks business enterprise makes a gift that costs more than its original capital, to say that "Galing Pilipino" made manifest, results in good business that enables philantrophy at Christmas time.

5. **Roxas Group/ AC Nielsen** Corporate giants whose leaders are GPM Trustees help make the Pamaskong Galing Pilipino project sizzle with their corporate love gifts that will enable the creation of Care Giving Centers for the Elderly. This project will be developed as a template for nursing homes and retirement communities as potential community-based businesses as part of GPM's Outreach program.

6. **Agora Awardees / GPM Trustees** - Shining lights that stand for marketing and business excellence in the Philippine firmament are Agora Awardees who magnanimously gave to be able to sponsor a PGP Tree together with the GPM Trustees. Donations in this tree will be allocated as designated by the individual donors. This PGP 'Tree of Unity' shows that the 'will to do' can result in 'galing' done.

Galing Pilipino Movement
Movement

# n their world,
# a cause

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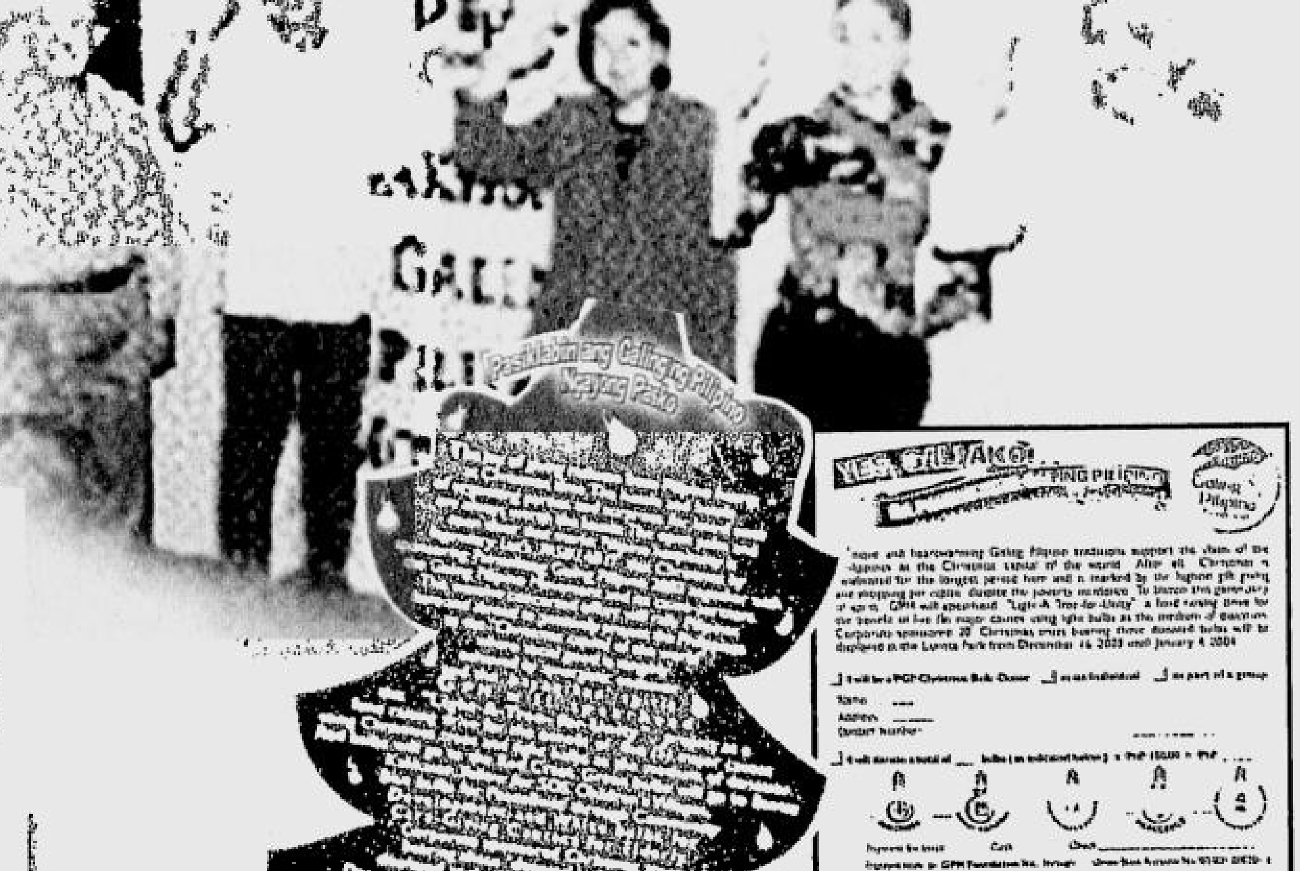
lliance of Christian Development Agencies has about 40 members focused on capacity toward holistic development, learning and exchange, support services, and programs nunity transformation in poverty-laden regions. The Mindanao Convergence is its key collaboration program with more than 25 members in six geographic groups. It was convened initially by ACDA member organizations - CRWRC, Open Doors, World Vision, REACH, Inc. and Share An Opportunity to respond to the Mindanao refugee crisis. An estimated number of 26,500 families were assisted in the relief efforts coordinated and facilitate by various evangelical church groups and other NGOs.

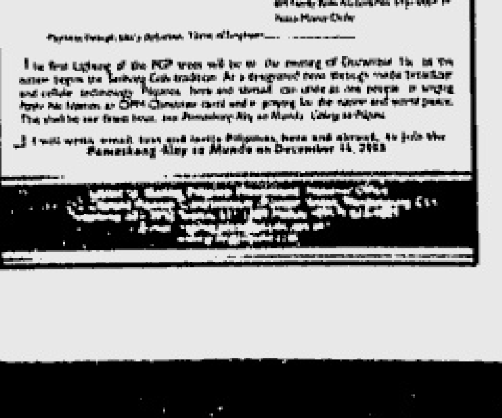
Care-giving Centers for Elderly, a GPM network of care-giving centers that aims not only to encourage caregivers to take care of Filipino elders before they go abroad, but also give them good training. The vision of networked care-giving centers is to establish nursing homes and retirement communities for the Filipino elders.



KO!..
ONG GALING PILIPINO

Galing Pilipino Movement

Pasiklabin ang Galing Pilipino Ngayong Pasko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- Graduates with minimum of 3 years experience in selling travel related products and in account development and management. Basic understanding of fares and ticketing is preferred. Driver's license is a must.

### TELEPHONE OPERATOR CUM RECEPTIONISTS (F)

- Presentable female candidates having minimum of 2 years experience in handling PABX board.
- Must possess excellent communication skills.

### EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (F)

- Female graduate having minimum of 3 years experience in similar field. Must possess excellent communication, correspondence skills and advance level knowledge of Microsoft office applications.

**THESE ARE URGENT REQUIREMENTS!!!**

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 4212327; 9116001 loc 6592
Website: www.afp.mil.ph
E-mail: cosb.j9@afp.mil.ph

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

## (RE-BIDDING)

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **ACQUISITION OF ONE (1) F-27-500 AIRCRAFT AND ITS INTEGRATED LOGISTICS SUPPORT (ILS)** for the Philippine Air Force with an approved budget of **Ninety One Million and Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 91,200,000.00)** under the AFP Modernization Program.

Only bids from prime contractors duly certified by the original equipment manufacturer (OEM), of the F-27-500 and/or by appropriate Government Aviation Authority/Agency shall be entertained.

The Bid documents will be available for issuance starting **16 December 2003 until 09 January 2004** during office hours (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM) at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Agullando, Quezon City upon payment of **Nine Thousand Pesos (Php 9,000.00)** which is not refundable. The form of payment will be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective Bidder authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of the bid documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **29 December 2003 at 9:00 AM** (local time) at Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bidders are required to submit their queries in writing to the BAC Secretariat three (3) days before the Pre-Bid Conference.

The deadline for submission of applications for eligibility requirements and bid envelopes is scheduled on **12 January 2004 at 2:00 PM** (local time) to be immediately followed by the Opening of Bids at the Silid Panday Pira.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of his bid.

FOR THE CHAIRMAN, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE.

(Original Sign)
ROBERTO G NUQUI
Brigadier General AFP
Vice-Chairman, BAC

(PDI - Dec. 16 & 23 2003)

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**LEGAL NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Priscila Landig was extra-judicially settled by the heirs as per Doc #14, Page #03, Book #01, Series of 2000 by Notary Public Atty. Romerico Regio of Pasig City.
(PDI-Dec. 16, 23, 30, 2003)

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*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."* ***John 3:16***

## ATTY. MANUEL BORROMEO DULAY

Beloved husband, father, and mentor

was peacefully reunited with the Lord on
13 December 2003 at the age of 75.

His loving wife, **CORDING**; his children **CORA** and **WAHJUDI**, **GERRY**, **TEDDY** and **DAISY**, and **DODO** and **EPETY**; his grandchildren **NICO**, **SAM**, **TIM**, **DEAN**, **BUDGIE**, **JAUME**, and **JOHN**; his brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, 18 December 2003, at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery, Caloocan City, Metro Manila.

---

## Honorato "NOR" L. Rivera

**of Pampanga and Las Piñas City**

*Died in the Grace of our Lord on December 13, 2003*
*at the age of 64.*

His bereaved wife **LUMING**; children: **Gia** and **Nieto**; **Eric** and **RP**; and **Topher**; grandchildren: **Angelo** and **Bea**; **Mother**, **Paring**; Brother **Ed** and **Jean**; nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Thursday, December 18, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City after the 12:45 p.m. Mass.

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## RICARDO SMITH MANOTOC, SR.

*Has peacefully joined our Creator*
*on December 11, 2003 at the age of 88.*

His late wife **Carmen**; children **Dini**, **Billy**, **Tommy** and **Patti**; grandchildren **Gary**, **Mavis**, **Ted**, **TJ**, **Vanessa**, **Nicola**, **Martin**, **Michael**, **Matthew** and **Gabriel**; great grandchildren **Gabby**, **Wani**, and **Stevie**, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal rest of his soul.

He was a good man, and will always be remembered fondly.

There will be a memorial service for him at 3 p.m. today, December 16, 2003 at the Capilla del Señor, Santuario de San Antonio, Makati City.

---

## NATIVIDAD DOMINGUEZ TORNEROS

*Peacefully joined the Lord and her husband, COL TIRSO P. TORNEROS (Ret.)*
*on 13 December 2003 at the age of 79.*

Her children **Dante** (†), **Voltaire**, **Monina**, **Tirso Jr.**, **Ma. Teresa**, and **Max**; daughters-in-law **Beth Mascardo**, **Yollie Medina**, **Emy Vidal**, and **Lorna Dagting**; sons-in-law **PN Captain Meynardo Talens** (Ret.) & **Commodore Alfredo Abueg**, **Jr.**, grandchildren **Allan & Raquel del Mundo**, **Boris**, **Custer**, **Dennis** (†) & **Erick** (†); **Iris & Bobby Montehermoso**, **Cindy Mae**, **Concon & RJ**; **Meynard MJ Talens**; **Ricci** and **Pam**; **Punyagi Abueg**; **Allisson** and **Josh**; great grandchildren, brothers and sisters **Remedios & Max Santos**, **Aurora & Hernando Valamores, Sr.** (†), **Pantaleon** (†) & **Nenita Watson**, **Angelita** (†) & **Lamberto Nolasco**, and **Ruperto & Merlina Alza**; nephews and nieces, other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence, 101 Imus Blvd. (Nueno Ave.), Imus, Cavite (behind Lolo Berong Bldg.).

Interment will be on Thursday, 18 December 2003 at St. Mary's Memorial Park after the 2:30 p.m. Mass at the Imus Cathedral.

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**I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

John 14:6

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## ATTY. RICARDO G. CRUZ

**of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija & Biñan Laguna**

*Peacefully joined his Creator on Sunday, December 14, 2003*
*at the age of 78.*

His beloved parents **Atty. & Mrs. Leoncio A. Cruz** (†); wife **Victorina Manse**; children: **Ador & Beth Alintanahin**, **Ricky & Desiree Cruz**, **Gil Cruz**; grandchildren, **Lilli-Anne**, **Thea Louise**, **Tricia Lorraine**; sisters, **Primavera** and **Priscilla**; brothers, **Teodoro** and **Henry**; brothers & sisters-in-law request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence at Platero, Biñan, Laguna.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 20, 2003 at the Biñan Municipal Cemetery after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the San Antonio de Padua Parish Church.

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## MARIA O. OROGO

*Peacefully passed away*
*on Dec. 14, 2003 at 84.*

She is survived by her children ARNULFO, JAIME, HUMBELINA, PRISCILLA, ROBERTO, and GEORGE; grandchildren, and in-laws.

The body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels at Guadalupe, Makati City. Interment will take place on Sunday, December 21, 2003 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina in the morning.

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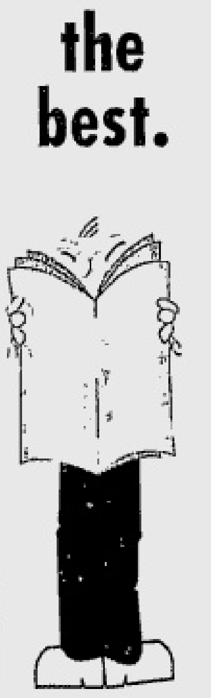
**"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."**

John 3:16

# CLASSIFIEDS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Telefax Nr 4212327; 9116001 loc 6592
Website: www.afp.mil.ph
E-mail: cosb.j9@afp.mil.ph

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **Supply and Delivery of Force Protection Equipment** with an approved budget of **One Hundred Twenty Nine Million and Six Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 129,600,000.00)** chargeable against the AFP Modernization Program Act Trust Fund, broken down as follows:

| NOMENCLATURE | AMOUNT | |
|---|---|---|
| Ballistic Helmet and Body Armor Sets | Php | 96,000,000.00 |
| Ballistic Helmets Only | | 33,600,000.00 |
| TOTAL | Php | 129,600,000.00 |

Only bids from manufacturers and exclusive suppliers/distributors of said equipment shall be entertained.

The Bid documents will be available for issuance starting **16 December 2003** until **29 January 2004** during office hours (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM) at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City upon payment of **Twelve Thousand Pesos (Php 12,000.00)**. The form of payment will be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

Representatives are required to present a **Special Power of Attorney** issued by the prospective Bidder before issuance of the Bid Documents and all other transaction thereto.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **06 January 2004** at **9:00 AM** (local time) at Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bidders are encouraged to submit queries in writing to the BAC Secretariat Three (3) days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission of eligibility requirements and bid envelopes is scheduled on **30 January 2004** at **9:00 AM** (local time) at the Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City which shall be followed by the Opening of Bids at 9:30 AM.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bid.

(Original Sign)
**REYNALDO D RIVERA**
Major General AFP
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Dec 16 & 23 2003)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
**GENERAL HEADQUARTERS**
**ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES**
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 4212327; 9116001 loc 6592
Website: www.afp.mil.ph
E-mail: cosb.j9@afp.mil.ph

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for in the 2-Stage bid process for the **Acquisition of Equipment for Two (2) Coast Watch Stations** of the Philippine Navy with an approved budget of **Fifty Three Million and Six Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 53,600,000.00)**. Said budget shall be charged against the AFP Modernization Program Funds.

Only bids from accredited integrators of coastal surveillance systems shall be entertained.

The 1st stage bid documents shall be available for issuance starting **15 December 2003** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguilando, Quezon City. The bid documents shall be issued upon payment of **Five Thousand and Three Hundred Sixty Pesos (Php 5,360.00)**, which is not refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the 1st stage bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **15 January 2004** at **9:00 AM** (local time) at Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bidders are encouraged to submit queries in writing to the BAC Secretariat Seven (7) days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission of eligibility requirements and bid envelopes is scheduled on **03 February 2004** at **9:00 AM** (local time) and immediately followed by the Opening of Bids at the Silid Panday Pira. Only those bidders found eligible shall be allowed to participate in the 2nd stage bidding activities.

The AFP reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder(s) in the preparation of the bid.

(Original Sign)
**REYNALDO D RIVERA**
Major General AFP
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - Dec 16 & 23 2003)

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1 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
2 ELF
3 MR. SUAVE
4 THE GRUDGE
5 GOOD BOY!
6 RUGRATS GO WILD
7 CABIN FEVER
8 MYSTIC RIVER

### SM CITY CEBU
2313976

1 CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION
2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
4 OUT OF TIME
5 WRONG TURN
6 COLD CREEK MANOR
7 THE GRUDGE
8 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

### SM CITY BACOOR
4173668

1 STAR RUNNER
2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 CABIN FEVER
4 ELF
5 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
6 MR. SUAVE
7 ALIPIN
8 RUGRATS GO WILD

### SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128065

1 JEEPERS CREEPERS
2 OUT OF TIME
3 BABAE SA BREAKWATER
4 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
5 COLD CREEK MANOR
6 SCARY MOVIE 3

### SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

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2 THE GRUDGE
3 CABIN FEVER
4 ALIPIN

### SM BICUTAN
7763655

1 THE GRUDGE
2 ALIPIN
3 MR. SUAVE
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

### SM CITY MARILAO

1 ELF
2 MR. SUAVE
3 WRONG TURN
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

### SM STA. MESA
7149522 • 7161416

1 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
2 ELF
3 MYSTIC RIVER
4 ALIPIN
5 CABIN FEVER
6 SCARY MOVIE 3
7 RUGRATS GO WILD
8 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
9 GOOD BOY!
10 MR. SUAVE

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8069088

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2 MYSTIC RIVER
3 JEEPERS CREEPERS
4 GOOD BOY!
5 THE GRUDGE
6 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
7 MR. SUAVE
8 CABIN FEVER
9 INTERNET QUEEN
10 ALIPIN

### SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9390049

1 GOOD BOY!
2 RUGRATS GO WILD
3 ALIPIN
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 CHAVIT SINGSON
6 THE GRUDGE
7 MYSTIC RIVER
8 CABIN FEVER
9 MR. SUAVE
10 SCARY MOVIE 3
11 LOONEY TUNES
12 INTERNET QUEEN

### SM CITY DAVAO
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1 OUT OF TIME
2 COLD CREEK MANOR
3 DARK BLUE
4 FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
5 SCARY MOVIE 3
6 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

### SM CITY LUCENA
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1 LOONEY TUNES
2 DARK BLUE
3 COLD CREEK MANOR
4 WRONG TURN

### SM MEGAMALL
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1 MYSTIC RIVER
RESERVE-A-SEAT dial 6366000
2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
4 OUT OF TIME
5 ELF
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7 RUGRATS GO WILD
8 STAR RUNNER
9 CABIN FEVER
10 GOOD BOY!
11 INTERNET QUEEN
12 ALIPIN

### SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 JEEPERS CREEPERS
2 INTERNET QUEEN
3 MR. SUAVE
4 ALIPIN

### SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1 SEX SCANDAL
2 RESERVED
3 THE PHONE
4 FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
5 SCARY MOVIE 3
6 UPTOWN GIRLS
7 RESERVED
8 THE WISHER

### SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 GOOD BOY!
2 ELF
3 CABIN FEVER
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 RUGRATS GO WILD
6 MYSTIC RIVER
7 ALIPIN
8 INTERNET QUEEN
9 THE GRUDGE
10 SCARY MOVIE 3
11 STAR RUNNER
12 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

### SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8590884

1 MASTER & COMMANDER
2 STAR RUNNER
3 THE WISHER
4 LOONEY TUNES

### SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505

1 SCARY MOVIE 3
2 LOONEY TUNES
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

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1 RUGRATS GO WILD
11:30 FS/12:00 MF/1:45/3:30/5:15/7:00/8:45/10:05 LFS/10:30 LMF/11:50 END

2 MYSTIC RIVER
11:15 FS/12:20 MF/3:00/5:40/8:20/10:40 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:20 END

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4 MYSTIC RIVER 10:50, 1:35, 4:20, 7:05, 9:55
2 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:40
5 CABIN FEVER 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
3 RUGRATS GO WILD 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
6 GOOD BOY 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
7 INTERNET QUEEN 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
9 THE GRUDGE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
8 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
10 ELF 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

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1 MYSTIC RIVER - 11:20, 2:10, 4:55, 7:40, 10:00
2 ELF - 10:10, 12:10, 2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:00, 9:50
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 RUGRATS GO WILD - 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
5 GOOD BOY - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
6 CABIN FEVER - 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

### Metro East
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682-8280

1 LOONEY TUNES
2 RUGRATS GO WILD
3 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
4 GOOD BOY
5 CABIN FEVER
6 MYSTIC RIVER
7 ELF
8 JEEPERS CREEPERS

### Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

1 RUGRATS GO WILD
2 MYSTIC RIVER
3 GOOD BOY
4 CABIN FEVER
5 THE GRUDGE
6 JEEPERS CREEPERS
7 SCARY MOVIE 3
8 INTERNET QUEEN

| Malabon<br>288-0985/2575 | | Cainta<br>240-4661 |
|---|---|---|
| INTERNET QUEEN | 1 | MYSTIC RIVER |
| ALIPIN | 2 | INTOLERABLE CRUELTY |
| CABIN FEVER | 3 | ALIPIN |
| JEEPERS CREEPERS | 4 | CABIN FEVER |

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| STAR RUNNER | 3 | BABAE SA BREAKWATER |
| THE WISHER | 4 | STAR RUNNER |
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| BABAE SA BREAKWATER | 2 | RUGRATS GO WILD |
| OUT OF TIME | 3 | ALIPIN |
| INTOLERABLE CRUELTY | 4 | CABIN FEVER |
| COLD CREEK MANOR | 5 | ELF |
| JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 | 6 | STAR RUNNER |

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|---|---|---|
| SCARY MOVIE 3 | 1 | SCARY MOVIE 3 |
| FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS | 2 | GIGLI |
| UPTOWN GIRLS | 3 | FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS |
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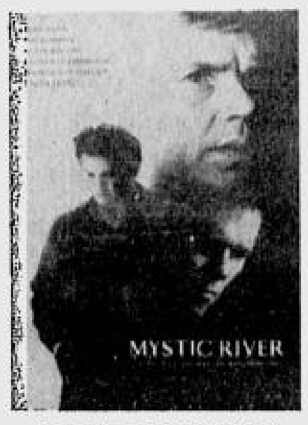

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| INTOLERABLE CRUELTY<br>PG13<br>12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10 | CABIN FEVER<br>R18<br>1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00 | MYSTIC RIVER<br>R13<br>11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:35, 10:20 |

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# REAL ESTATE

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*Editor* Cesar D. Mangawang

# Developers say no to VAT but yes to securitization bill

By Charles E. Buban

AN ORGANIZATION of subdivision and housing developers believes the 10 percent value-added tax on interest payment on housing loan payments and banking services negates some of the reforms the Arroyo administration has undertaken to make housing and housing finance more accessible and affordable to the countless homeless Filipinos.

The organization is referring to the Bureau of Internal Revenue regulation 12 that took effect on Jan. 1 this year.

Subdivision and Housing Developers Association president Marilu Alferez says that while the country has successfully lowered interest rates to make housing more affordable, the imposition of 10 percent VAT increases interest rates once more.

### Less people can obtain loans

"Higher interest rates mean higher monthly amortization and less affordability. Ultimately, higher monthly amortization means that less homeless Filipinos can obtain housing loans and be part of the President Arroyo's housing program," she says.

According to SHDA, the new charges will affect about 350,000 housing loan borrowers and 1.5 million members paying multipurpose loans.

SHDA says the imposition of 10 percent VAT affects old and current accounts as well.

### Higher rates of defaults

"The increase in monthly amortization amounts as a result of VAT would lead to higher rates of defaults and nonpayments," warns SHDA chair Jesus Atencio.

"For existing borrowers, the additional payment for 10 percent VAT was never considered when they applied and qualified for their housing loan. Being fixed-income earners, most of mass housing borrowers are on a budget," he feared.

He also adds that a sudden surge of 10 percent in amortization payments would create confusion among SHDA member-borrowers, and because this expense was not budgeted, SHDA feels that this will lead to increase past-due ratios and degrading levels of collection efficiency.

In exchange, SHDA is advocating the exemption.

"Instead SHDA advocates the usage of 5 percent gross receipt tax and exempt our members from VAT on interest payments since this passes the tax burden from corporate users to the end-users that are unable to utilize their VAT payment as tax credits," Alferez says.

### Passage of securitization bill

In another issue, SHDA is hoping for the passage of the securitization bill.

"Securitization allows both the government and private financial institutions to unlock the long-term mortgages (usually 20 to 30 years) and convert these into cash that can be lent again to the low-cost housing sector," reveals Alferez.

In effect, this will provide the low-income sector with more funds that can be borrowed to finance purchases of housing units.

### Availability of long-term funds

Atencio adds that this will also allow the shorter-term funds to invest into the securities, thereby increasing the availability of long-term funds that can be relent to the housing sector.

"The entry of the short-term funds for housing will lead to a lower interest rate for long-term funds, thereby reducing the interest rate for housing mortgages," says Atencio.

SHDA believes this expansion of fund availability will translate to a higher supply level of housing units, thereby allowing the benefits of cost reduction through economies of scale.

"Securitization will therefore be able to make more funds available for housing while at the same time reducing the cost of housing," concludes Alferez.

SERRANO

TARIO

BAGATSING

GORAYEB

MILLAN

SOLIVEN

# Creba honors founder, 7 others at 30th year rites

LAWYER Manuel M. Serrano, founder of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations (Creba), and seven other officers were honored last week with various awards at ceremonies highlighting Creba's 30th foundation anniversary at the Manila Hotel Floating Restaurant.

The anniversary committee was composed of lawyer Luis B. Pangilinan Jr. and Editha L. Manansala, overall chair and co-chairperson, respectively. Heading the subcommittees were Florante C. Ofrecio, invitations; Avelina Acuña, chapters participation; Thad Liamzon, venue/physical arrangements; Purita R. Soliven, reception; Sammy G. Valencia, program; Dulalia and Pedro C. Tario, ways and means; Teresita Millan, finance, and Rosemarie Basa, media.

### Highest award

Serrano received the highest Pillar Award for continuously serving Creba since its incorporation 30 years ago. Creba honored two past presidents for exemplary contributions to the organization and the industry, three "very select officers" for exemplary contributions, and two officers for serving for more than 10 continuous years.

Serrano, together with 14 other industry developers and professionals, formed Creba in 1973. It is aimed at serving as an industry advocacy group and a catalyst for real estate and housing development. It is now considered the country's biggest and most active industry organization.

Serrano was cited as "The founder whose vision and uninterrupted services to the chamber from its incorporation up to the present, with conviction and determination in advocating policies that improved shelter financing and production, resulting to more affordable homes for the homeless Filipinos, and guiding Creba to its role as the beacon light of the real estate industry."

### Hall of Famers

Pedro C. Tario and Amado C. Bagatsing were elevated to the Creba Hall of Fame for exemplary contributions as past national presidents.

Tario, now presidential adviser, served as president in 1991-1992 and contributed much to help Creba attain its status as the premier industry organization. Bagatsing served as president in 1981, 1982 and 1986. He was also cited for his sponsorship of meaningful legislation and resolutions beneficial to the industry, as a former congressman, and at present as vice chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council.

Charlie V. Gorayeb, Teresita Millan and Victorio V. Soliven were given awards of distinction as "very select officers." Gorayeb served as president in 1989, 1990, September to December 1994, 1995, 1998 and 2001 and is cited for his "vision to give Creba a permanent home, by exerting efforts to oversee the construction of the Creba Center in 1990." Millan served as national treasurer for more than 15 years. Soliven is cited as one of its incorporators, as past president, and for having been an active member for 30 years, that contributed immensely to the development of Creba.

### Invaluable services

Florentino S. Dulalila Jr. and Domingo D. De Vera were honored for their "invaluable services to the Chamber, as active members and officers in various capacities for more than 10 years, and for all his major contributions to the chamber."

Special recognition was extended to Boysen Paint, Villar Group of Companies, VV Soliven Group of Companies and Extraordinary Development Corp. for their tireless and consistent support to the chamber in all its major activities, thus contributing immensely to the success of Creba's major activities, that redound to the benefit of the Chamber's members, and the public.

# Why people sell their homes

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.

A READER of our article last week has sent me an e-mail:

"I am a regular reader of your column and was enlightened to read the benefits and drawbacks of buying a used home. I have been constantly looking for a used home but every time I visit one, I am always embarrassed to ask from the seller the real reason they are selling. I am afraid that if I buy a used home, there is a defect in the house that the seller did not reveal and I will end up spending much money to fix it later. Could you discuss the reasons people sell their homes?"

### Why they sell

Unlike other developed countries in which the seller or the broker is legally bound to disclose any defects on the house, you are left on your own and not quite protected when it comes to buying used homes here. The real estate term 'caveat emptor' means that the buyer takes the risk for any defects, whether technical or legal, concerning the property. This simply means that due diligence should be done prior to purchasing real estate.

The reasons for selling can be many but can simply be grouped into two: 1) people sell for the right reasons like the need for a bigger space but on the other hand, 2) they may be selling because they are trying to get rid of a property with a technical or legal defect. In any case, if you are buying a used home, be extra careful and try your best to know the real reasons the current owners are selling.

The many reasons people sell their homes vary:

- **Bigger space requirements**—As the family grows, so does the requirement for space. Many people sell because they simply would want to upgrade. Also, as one's professional career or business advances, more money becomes available for the home upgrade. Some families upgrade not because they have to but simply because they want to.
- **Bad experience on the house**—Filipinos are very superstitious. When something unpleasant happens to the family like sudden illnesses, burglary, accidents, bad business and the like, we blame it on the house. A house in which a crime has been committed is most of the time sold by the owner.
- **Unsafe community**—The quiet subdivisions of yesteryears can become the noisy ones of today. As population grows and infrastructure projects are built, noise, air pollution and crime can increase. An unsafe neighborhood can depress land values of the area.
- **Job relocation**—A job transfer to a far location can make one sell the existing house. If the new job requires a transfer of the entire family, then acquiring a new home at a new location that is closer to work and schools may be the logical choice.
- **Far from the shopping area**—Some families would want to live very close to the shopping areas. If a shopping mall has just been built in an area, people would want to move closer to these areas for convenience.
- **It's their business**—There are real estate investors who are in the business of buying used homes, fixing them up, and selling for a profit. These homes are commonly called fixer-uppers.
- **Can no longer make the payments**—A common reason people sell is that the owners can no longer make the payments and the property may even be in the brink of foreclosure. This can be due to changing job and business conditions for the breadwinner.
- **Grown-up children**—After the children finish school, get married, and eventually leave the house, the parents may decide to sell and downgrade to a smaller home.
- **Sudden change in family conditions**—This can include a recent separation or the passing away of a spouse. The owners may just want to sell the house and buy another one to ease the new financial burden or to forget unpleasant events of the past.
- **Migration**—As families migrate to other countries, they cash in and sell their homes.
- **Defective house**—There are pieces of property that can be defective and the best way to get out of the situation is to simply sell. As an example, the current owners may not have known that the area is flood prone which makes it impassable even to light vehicles with a short amount of rain. Another reason is that the house may have major structural defects.
- **Time to buy a new one**—If you have seen people who sell their old car and buy a new one every two years, I have seen families who sell their home and buy a new one every five years.

**Final Note.** The reasons for selling a house vary and are greatly influenced by the present situation of the owner and the condition of the house and neighborhood. If you are buying a used home, be alert on the real reasons the owners are selling. Be extra careful on the possible defects that are present in the house that can cause problems later. It is always best to ask for the help and advice of a competent professional of your choice so that the home can be assessed in a technical and legal way.

*E-mail the author at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.*

# Greenfield Estates benefit from Digitel tech

AYALA Greenfield Estates, Ayala Land and Greenfield Development Corp.'s current endeavor in the south, has partnered up with Digitel for top-of-the-line telecommunication services in the Laguna-based project. During the recent turnover rites, several details were unveiled regarding this momentous union.

Digitel was chosen among several telecom service providers mainly because its entirely digital facilities have been immensely advantageous to specific AGE requirements. Fiber-optic cables and radio relay stations are also prime components of a Luzon-wide backbone transition system. These technological advances provide the appropriate resources that will be needed most by residents and residents-to-be.

"The deal ensures that the major infrastructure backbone that will serve the telecommunications needs of the residents of Ayala Greenfield Estates will be in place," shares Jun Bisnar, AGDC deputy general manager.

The Digitel-AGE deal has led to a smooth, progressive team-up that has been tremendously helpful to the new community. "At this point, it's already online. For six years, it's going to be the exclusive provider in the area. These are brand-new copper lines," says Eric Feliciano, vice president for corporate sales of LEC (Local Exchange Carrier), who played an integral part in putting up the agreement between AGE and Digitel.

The contract was actually signed on Oct. 3, 2002. Construction and installation of facilities immediately took place, and these were recently activated, serving the needs of both AGE homeowners and their luxurious clubhouse.

The partnership not only gives the assurance of competitive communication standards, but also is one of many sought-after features that allow AGE homeowners to make the transition of living in the distinguished new community a smooth one. Such a transition isn't very difficult because residents have been overwhelmingly appreciative of the many appealing facets inherent to AGE.

This range of services also enables the homeowners to reach and invite those unfamiliar with the place, such as friends, family and co-workers, to acquaint themselves with the distinctly conceptualized and discerningly executed mesh of sporting and living amenities.

Says Bisnar: "AGE provides a unique and exhilarating living experience to the residents of the upscale and exclusive subdivision. The majestic views of nature's best features, the clean and fresh breeze of the surrounding environment, and the superior clubhouse facilities and amenities provide the best place for raising your family or for spending your retirement years."

A major attraction in AGE is the all-weather 18-hole, Par 72 Championship golf course designed by world-renowned golf course architect Robert Trent Jones Jr.

Dads Domingo, vice president and general manager for South commercial operations, shares that the partnership has been mutually beneficial to both Ayala Greenfield and Digitel, and most important, to the residents. "It's telecommunication service at its best, especially in the South, because we are the dominant telecom service provider already in Southern Luzon. So particular benefits include the full range of services, all of these using state-of-the-art technology," elaborates Domingo.

"This is a high-end residential resort complex, and it's a big thing that the company was chosen over other competitors. And the residents won't be disappointed with our services. We will be linking them to the rest of the world," Belleza enthuses.

Developing AGE's 300-hectare residential and recreational haven has been an unequivocal labor of love for real estate leaders Ayala Land Inc., and Greenfield Development Corp. And with Digitel's digital aid, the good word about the perfect blending of an exclusive residential development with the area's natural setting is effortlessly spread.

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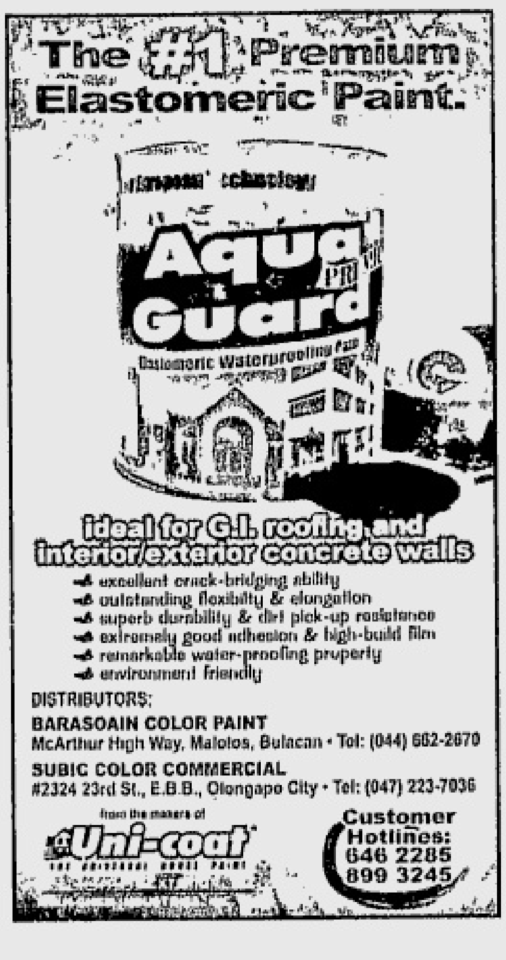
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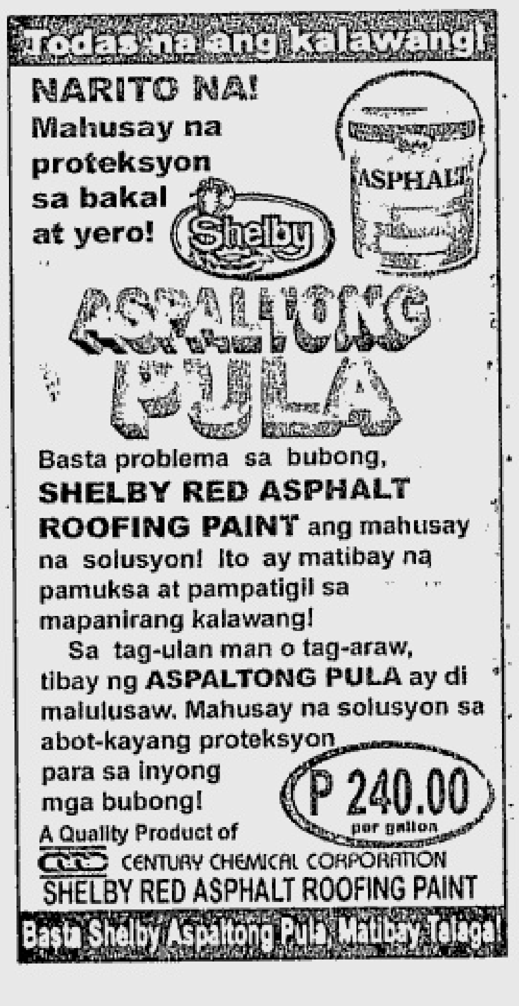
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# BUSINESS

## ERC urged to reverse order allowing Meralco rate hike

**By Abigail L. Ho**

THREE consumer groups are asking the Energy Regulatory Commission to reverse its earlier decision authorizing Lopez-controlled Manila Electric Co. to raise electricity rates by 12 centavos per kilowatt-hour.

The National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms (Nasecore) was the first to file its opposition, saying consumers should not be the ones to shoulder the burden of financing the debt-saddled utility's projects.

The ERC cited as a reason for granting Meralco a provisional authority to hike rates the 42 capital projects that the firm had to defer due to lack of funds.

"The provisional increase averaging 12 centavos was given to Meralco to ease its financial difficulties in funding its capital-intensive expansion programs and ensure continuous supply of safe, reliable and quality electric service," ERC Chair Manuel Sanchez said in an earlier statement.

However, Nasecore said Meralco's financial burden should not be passed on to consumers in the form of higher electricity bills starting Jan. 1, 2004.

Two other consumer groups, the Philippine Consumer Watch Foundation (PCWF) and the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC), followed suit and filed their separate opposition to the ERC decision.

The PCWF, led by former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, said Meralco's petition for a provisional authority to raise rates "does not contain valid justification."

"Any capital expenditure by Meralco goes into the computation of its rate base and that thereafter, the legal return-on-rate base must be determined after proper valuation and appraisal," Enrile said in the group's manifestation.

"To make its customers advance the needed capital for Meralco's project would be doubly injurious to its customers as they are bound to subsequently pay for the cost of these projects through their monthly billings despite the fact that they financed the same in the first place," he added.

The FDC, for its part, through its secretary general Lidy Nacpil and legal counsel Romeo Dolleton, filed a motion for production of documents, similar to what Nasecore and PCWF were seeking.

The group also urged the ERC to order Meralco to produce its updated financial statement, taking into consideration the Supreme Court decision barring income taxes from being deducted as operating expense as well as a list of all assets that Meralco acquired as of Dec. 31, 2002.

Ilagan said three local government units had likewise gotten in touch with Nasecore to request copies of documents related to the Meralco rate-hike petition.

"This is a good sign and it shows that local leaders are making a position to protect the rights of their constituents. We call on all consumers who are already tired of the abuses of Meralco to make it known to the regulatory body that you are opposing its petition for rate increase," he said.

## *RP, Japan promote Asia's IT initiative*

**By Michelle V. Remo**

THE GOVERNMENTS of Japan and the Philippines have agreed to collaborate in developing their respective information technology sectors and in promoting Asia as one of the world's major IT hubs.

Japan's Office of the Minister of State and the Department of Trade and Industry said the two countries were set to create programs and share knowledge on IT development in support of the so-called Asia IT Initiative.

The governments of the two countries will tap their private industries and the academe to help push through with the IT-promotion initiative, which they expect to significantly contribute to the development of their economies.

As this developed, the Japan International Cooperation Agency has launched three programs that are aimed at upgrading the skills of Filipino IT professionals. The programs were first offered by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi during President Macapagal-Arroyo's state visit to Japan in December last year.

The programs include the establishment by mid-2004 of the Nihongo Center Foundation, the Japanese IT Standard Examination (Jitse) Training/Review, and the IT Training Center.

The Nihongo Center Foundation will train Filipino IT professionals on the Japanese language, while the Jitse Training/Review will help Filipino engineers pass the Jitse examination, which accredits engineers to work in Japan. The IT Training Center will train students to become IT engineers.

The DTI and Japan's Ministry of State, in a joint statement, said the development of human resources was vital to the fulfillment of the objective of developing the IT sector.

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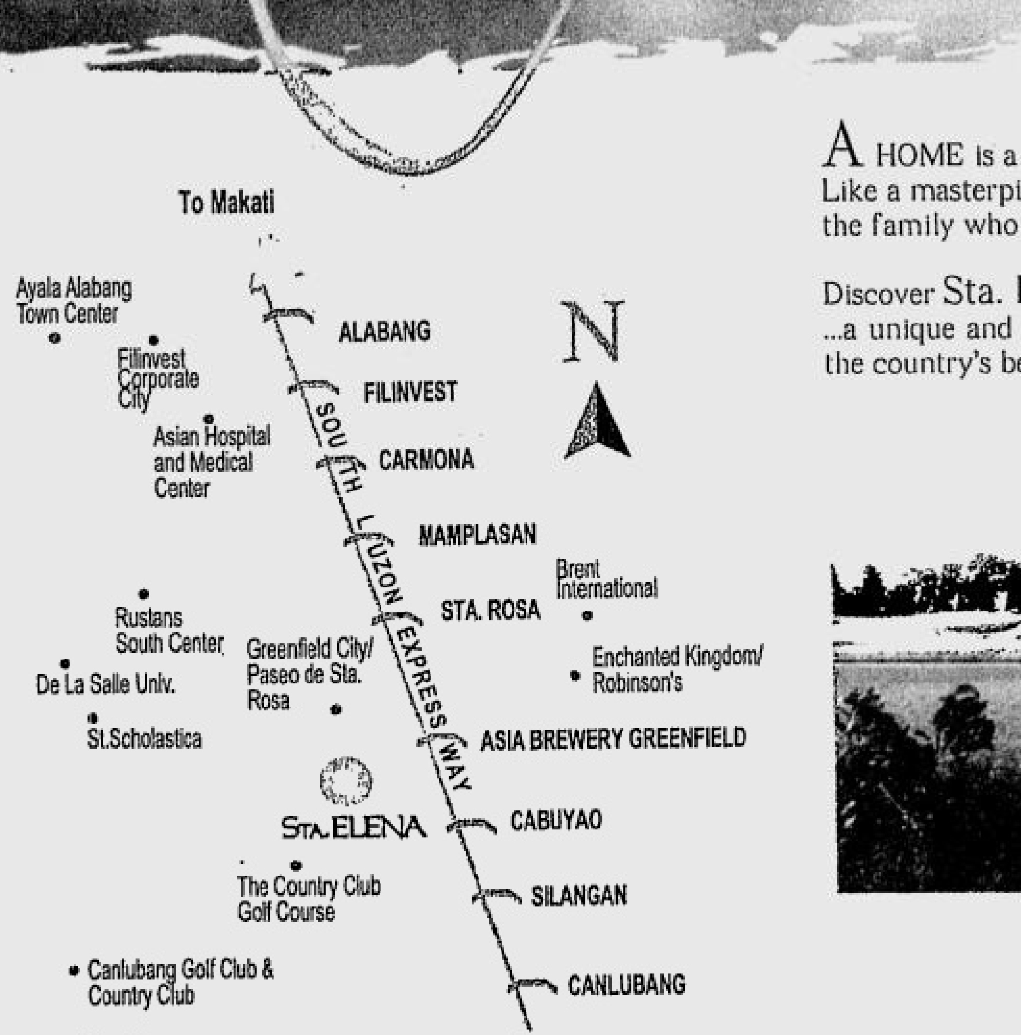

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## SMC, ATI nearing deal on ₱2-B grains terminal

**By Elena R. Torrijos**

SAN Miguel Corp., Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage conglomerate, expects to complete soon a deal to acquire the operations of Bataan-based Mariveles Grain Terminal from port operator Asian Terminals Inc. for over P2 billion.

"I heard two days ago from the seller that they've worked out the legal issues regarding the land (of the terminal), therefore, we can finish the transaction soon," SMC president Ramon Ang told reporters Friday evening.

ATI owns the contract to develop and operate the terminal, the most modern bulk handling facility in the country, until 2013. The contract is renewable for another 20 years under agreements with the Philippine Ports Authority and the province of Bataan.

In 2002, the Mariveles terminal handled 2.10 million metric tons of grain products, an improvement of 25.9 percent from the previous year.

SMC earlier said it was planning to pump in over P5 billion to build a logistics powerhouse.

In the meantime, Ang said Friday that SMC was setting aside P10 billion in capital expenditures for 2004, including outlays for its regional expansion in four priority countries—Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam. SMC plans to set up in these areas plant facilities to produce beer, processed meat and a complete line of non-alcoholic beverages. The company aims to produce "halal" food for distribution in large Muslim population in the region.

Ang said SMC's international operations should recover in the fourth quarter and end the year with an income of $8 million.

## Call center sector expecting 100% growth in 2004

THE CALL center industry is seen ending the year with around 21,000 seats, more than double of last year's 10,000 seats, an industry expert has said.

Miguel Garcia, director and treasurer of Contact Federation of the Philippines, said in an interview yesterday that apart from the more than 100-percent growth from 2002 to 2003, the industry would likely grow by another 80 percent to 100 percent in 2004.

He said the fact that next year was election year did not really bother call centers and other businesses outsourcing their contact service requirements from investing in the Philippines.

Barring any major political upheavals, like another coup attempt, he expressed confidence that the industry would continue treading the growth path it had been on these past couple of years.

"Based on what our partners and customers are saying, I feel pretty confident that we will achieve a growth of 80 percent to 100 percent. The Philippines is getting the momentum now. Three years ago, people didn't even know about the Philippines. But now, companies in the US want their call center services set up here," he said.

While the country's political stability remained "a big question mark," he said its actual impact on the industry was not that big as foreign call centers and other firms still see the advantages of setting up shop or outsourcing their requirements here.

He said the fact that most customer service representatives working in call centers here came from the country's top 10 to 15 universities and colleges was reason enough to look at the Philippines as a good location for outsourcing.

*Abigail L. Ho*

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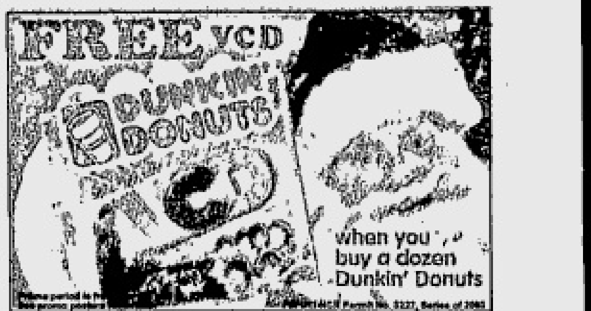
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# Managing your Christmas calorie budget

ILLUSTRATION BY: STEPH BRAVO

**WELL AND GOOD**

*Tina Juan*

UNLESS you have lots of spare money, you need a well-planned Christmas budget to be able to survive the holiday season financially intact.

The same goes for your calorie budget. Unless you have an incredibly fast metabolism, you need to wisely manage your calories or you could end up many pounds heavier, or even one or two sizes bigger.

In the financial world, it is easier to spend money than it is to make it. In the calorie world, it is the opposite. It is much harder to burn energy than it is to store it.

A fast-food meal of a large cheeseburger (609 calories), large fries (578 calories) and a large soft drink (413 calories) can be eaten in less than 20 minutes for a total of 1,599 calories.

You would need to walk at a fast pace for five and a half hours to burn off the same amount.

The last two weeks of the year are the worst in the struggle between temptation and willpower. An abnormal amount of fattening food surrounds you and seeks you out. You can run, but you cannot hide.

Many people find it difficult to say no when faced with a wide variety of sweets, cakes and desserts at practically every meal. Alcohol also flows freely at the many Christmas parties and get-togethers you attend. So how do you survive this caloric maelstrom?

## Approach 1: Eat all you can

There are basically three approaches to this yearly problem. The first is to throw all caution to the wind, eat away to your heart's delight, and pay the piper in January. This is the same approach used by some holiday shoppers who spend money like there was no tomorrow and worry about paying the credit card company after New Year's.

If you don't mind getting progressively bigger as you end the year and you don't mind working extra hard to regain your weight and figure by exercising and dieting the first quarter of next year, this approach is for you.

If this describes your caloric management plan for this Christmas, then read no further and let the eating begin.

## Approach 2: Controlled weight gain

The second approach is "controlled weight gain." This is for people who want to "sin" by indulging in holiday delicacies but want to control how much "penance" they will pay in terms of weight gain.

This is the same strategy used by sensible Christmas shoppers who go into controlled debt by using their credit card to shop. They know how much they are willing to spend now and pay later.

Here's how this plan works in terms of calories and weight gain. A pound of body fat is equal to 3,500 calories. If you eat a slice of chocolate cake (300 calories) every day, you will gain 1.2 pounds in two weeks. This is assuming you have an average metabolism and you do not change your physical activity level and normal daily caloric intake.

If you are used to exercising three times a week and burning 300 calories per session and you stop working out, you will gain an additional half a pound in 14 days.

To determine your caloric budget, decide how many pounds you are willing to gain and multiply that by 3,500 calories. That is your spending money.

If you are going to stop exercising, you will also have to factor in how many calories you will no longer be burning and deduct that amount from your "budget."

Since different activities burn different calories and your body weight also plays a role in how many calories you burn, go to http://www.primusweb.com/fitnesspartner/jumpsite/calculat.htm to get the answer from their Activity Calorie Calculator.

Next, determine how many days you have to spend your calories. Some people set Dec. 31 as the last day to enjoy holiday treats. Others extend their deadline past that date to finish all the leftovers.

Spread your calories evenly throughout all the days or use up most of your calories on special days like Dec. 24, 25 and 31.

Now comes the fun part. Make a list of all the food you want to splurge on. Go to www.calorie-count.com and find out the corresponding caloric value. If you don't want to be surprised by a few more pounds than you are willing to gain, pay close attention to portion sizes.

If you go into denial about how much you are eating or drinking, you will pay the price. Here's a short list of common sweets, desserts and alcoholic drinks to give you an idea.

Cookies: 50-100 calories per cookie
Cake: 1 slice, 200-400
Ice cream: 1 cup, 200- 300
Chocolate bar: 200-300
Pies: 1 slice, 200-400
Soft drinks: 12 oz, 150
Wine, red or white: 1 glass, 105
Beer: 12 oz, 150
Light beer: 12 oz, 100
Cocktails: 150-250
Hard drinks (whiskey, vodka, tequila, gin): 80 proof, 1 shot, 100
Hard drinks: 100 proof, 1 shot, 125

Caloric information on Filipino delicacies like *kakanins, lechon* and all other types of Pinoy food is available through the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI). You can call them at 8372071 (local 2300) and order the E-Calc, a food and exercise database on CD.

As a rough rule of thumb, allocate about 200 calories for every average serving of *bibingka, puto bumbong, biko, suman.*

Remember that in this life, there is a consequence for every action you take. So, in January, you will have to get rid of the additional pounds you were willing to gain in return for the all the sweet and fatty food you enjoyed.

But since you were sensible about your weight gain, your karma won't be painful. All you need to do is stop eating and drinking all the fattening stuff and go back to your regular diet and exercise program.

Depending on how much you decided to gain, you should return to your original weight by the end of January or middle of February.

With the first approach of indiscriminate eating, you can easily end up with 10 extra pounds. The second approach is more rational, because you set limits on your weight gain and you don't have to work so hard to lose the weight.

## Approach 3: Weight maintenance

The third approach is weight maintenance. You can do this by just saying no to all the Christmas treats and continuing your usual diet and exercise routine.

If you can do this, more power to you. You deserve a prize because you are a rare individual with incredible discipline and willpower.

The other way to have your cake and eat it too is to indulge a little and but do a bit more calorie juggling in your diet or physical activity. Weight maintenance is a balancing act between calories in and calories out. To make up for additional calories, you need to either burn them off with extra physical activity or eat less of your normal food intake.

For example, to enjoy the 300 calories in a slice of chocolate cake every day without gaining weight, you would have to do a daily extra one hour of brisk walking or you would have to shave off 300 calories from your daily diet.

Choose the plan that best suits your personality and lifestyle. Happy holiday eating!

*For past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.info; for suggestions for future columns, e-mail me at fitness@attglobal.net*

> Watch your food intake this season so you don't end up several pounds heavier

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

## *Prone calf stretch on stability ball*

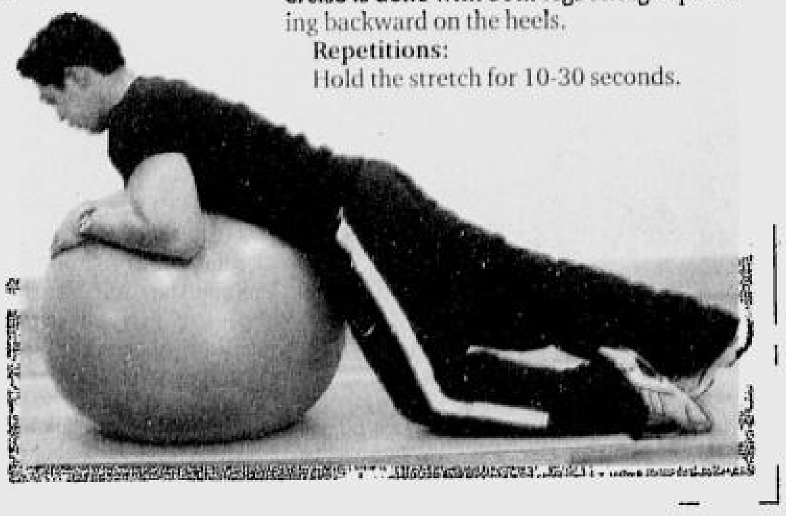
THIS exercise stretches the calves or muscles at the back of the lower leg.

**Equipment:**

Stability ball and exercise mat. As a substitute, you can use the side of a bed and a thick towel.

**Exercise technique:**

1. Kneel down on the mat. Place your upper body on the ball supported on your forearms.
2. Straighten your right leg behind you supported on your toes.
3. Pull your body forward on the ball and press backward with your heel until you feel the stretch on your calf.
4. Hold the stretch for the desired length of time, then switch legs.



**Performance tips:**

1. Avoid holding your breath as you hold the stretch. Focus on breathing deeply and evenly.
2. The more advanced version of this exercise is done with both legs straight pressing backward on the heels.

**Repetitions:**

Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds.

onstage 2nyt

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|---|---|---|
| LAS PIÑAS ☎ 801.7644 | PHRYGIAN CROSSTOWN | OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE |
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| MALATE ☎ 521.8143 | SERSIDE ICE KENDI | OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE |
| NOVALICHES ☎ 936.9757 | MUSIC CIRCUIT FEEDBACK | OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM [illegible] |
| BIÑAN ☎ (049)511.7268 | FAT 16 HEADWORKZ | OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE |
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DECEMBER 16 TUESDAY

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2929, Series of 2003.

**BARO** followers. Michelle Tiangco and Kaye Tingga

**THE ROMULOS.** Attractive ladies Georgina Remulla and Berna Puyat with their dad, Executive Secretary Bert Romulo

**THE BENCH GANG.** Architect Miguel Pastor, former model Alta Tan, gorgeous Lucy Torres Gomez and Ben Chan

# Politics gets sidelined in book launch

**WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH**

*Maurice Arcache*

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen on Kodak Max**

**ACHIEVERS.** Dr. Pat Gonzales, Kathy Silverio and Ambassador Precious Soliven

**MARIDEE** Changyengco and Jeannie Sandoval

**WOMEN** of substance. Nona Lobregat, Nikkie Prieto Teodoro and Louie Locsin

**BETSY'S** famille. Jaime Brias and Lorraine Andrews...

...**AND** Pamen Hagedorn and Antonio Brias, who gave a toast to the exhibit's success

**MARCO** Diaz and his true love Victoria Toda flank Betsy W.

WHEN **Mons Romulo Tantoco** calls, everyone runs, and that's how it was when Cosmo Manille's younger crowd and old guards endured the horrendous, nerve-racking traffic to get to the perfect place—the Bahay Pangarap in Malacañang Park with its native interior—for a super successful book launching. The sumptuous buffet was superbly prepared by the culinary queen of Pampanga, **Maritel Nievera Shani**, no less, of the famous Cabalen chain of restaurants. Beautiful Philippine music completed the ambience.

After the success of the Terno Ball of the Met Museum, once again the women of society proudly wore their eye-catching Filipiniana outfits during the exciting book launch of "Baro! Philippine Fabric and Fashion," *palanggas*.

There to greet the guests were the book's publishers—**Gina de Venecia**, president of the Congressional Spouses Foundation; Marikina Mayor **Marides Carlos-Fernando**; Metropolitan Museum director **Ino Manalo**; and "Baro Philippine Fabric and Fashion" editor, Star columnist Mons T. with Sander, her very supportive businessman husband. **Johnny Litton** was host.

The three women all gave meaningful messages on the value of our Philippine fabrics and presented our President, **Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo**, a copy of the interesting book.

At the presidential table were the biggies of the Star, chair **Max Soliven** with his observant wife, Unesco Ambassador **Precious Soliven**; popular Executive Secretary **Alberto Romulo**, who was full of pride and joy for his daughter Mons; Secretary **Roilo Golez** and his wife **Naty**; Secretary **Leandro Mendoza** and wife **Sol**, and the royalty of the retail trade—Bench, Celio—**Ben Chan**, natch!

That evening had tons of powerful women getting together, setting aside politics and joining hands for a common cause, dahlings, "to showcase our Philippine fabrics and the inexhaustible talents of not only our weavers, but our Philippine designers and many other members of the fashion field. Each book you buy will go to the ladies' chosen charity specifically one that will benefit women," explained Mons, the lady of the hour.

"It took us three hours to get here," explained an exhausted **Anton San Diego** and fashion plate **Sigalit Djemal**. "We kept going around and around and ended up on the same spot, would you believe?"

"It was a nerve-racking drive but well worth it," said Pineapple and Cereo's **Anton Barretto**. "After two hours in the car and the traffic, I told my driver to turn around and go back to Makati. But he told me, 'We are here now.'"

"I didn't realize I was asleep all the while," a socialite told me.

The "Baro Philippine Fabric and Fashion" book will soon be available in Mag:net Plus and selected bookstores nationwide.

For inquiries, call 5211517 or 5230613. E-mail monsrt@info.com.ph.

Showing as much interest in the book as in the author were such standouts—headturners like stunning beauty **Nikki Prieto Teodoro**; tall, elegant **Nona Lobregat**; attractive **Georgina Remulla** and **Thelma Dumpit**.

Aside from being a columnist, a civic-oriented young woman involved in several charitable organizations with a busy social and working schedule, Mons has now given us a coffee-table book we can all be proud of.

Yes, *palanggas*, Mons is definitely one heck of a woman.

## Super opening for art show

Cosmo Manille's artsy set arrived in tidal-wave force for the super opening of the exhibit of the gorgeous paintings by well-known fab international artist **Betsy Westendorp**, at where all the art action is taking place, the Galleria Duemila. The exhibit was held coincidentally during the Spanish Fiesta to celebrate the Spanish-Filipino Friendship Month, *palanggas*.

Betsy's renowned bouquets of colorful tropical flowers against sunny yellow backgrounds were so vibrant that the chi-chi viewers felt like they could reach out and touch them.

The popular, *simpatico* Ambassador of Spain, H.E. **Ignacio Sagaz**, no less, together with debonaire Ambassador **Bienvenido Tantoco**, chair of the Rustan Group of Companies, and lady with the golden heart and the hostess with the mostest, **Zenaida "Nedy" Rustia Tantoco**, president of Rustan Marketing Corporation, snipped the ceremonial ribbons opening the exhibit, amid the thunderous applause of guests who could hardly wait to see up close the new works.

Pals and art collectors from way back came and welcomed Betsy, who had been absent from Manille's art scene for four years.

Among them were art lovers like socialite **Naty Pappas**, famous architect and gourmet **Chito Antonio**, and **Rachy Cuna**, decorator and guru of good taste who brought a huge bouquet. And one couldn't miss top new editor **Ibarra C. Mateo**.

Also, there was the beautiful famille of three—renowned photographer of the Who's Who of the World, **Rupert Jacinto**, and his fashionable wife **Tina** and daughter **Jacqueline**. Others were popular architect **Manny Minana**, and who doesn't know the famous art restorer **Helmuth Zotter**? They were all admiring Betsy's works of art.

## Intramuros night market

I've always found night markets to be so much fun to go to. The weather is cooler, and somehow the lights make the merchandise look so much nicer, *palanggas*.

So when Dr. **Yolie Balmes** threw open her super night market, dubbed Wow na Wow Sale, in eye-catching historic Intramuros along Anda Street, she surely knew she had a good thing going.

She even had Tourism Secretary **Dick Gordon**'s wholehearted endorsement of the night market, which Yolie described as "my contribution to promoting the Wow Philippines tourism campaign by bringing under one roof the best products of the Philippines for foreign and domestic tourists."

She had the 636-sq m site covered and air-conditioned (truly unusual for a *tiangge, di bala?*). There were clean toilets, thank goodness, and convenient pay-phones.

It was so successful that, before you could bat an eyelash, the go-go gal that Yolie is, expanded the market to an adjoining 446-sq m area, which opened just a week ago.

Fr. **Pedro Galende**, OSA, of the San Agustin Church officiated in the blessing of the Wow na Wow *tiangge*.

Hotshots at the opening were Department of Tourism heavyweights **Armand Arreza** and **Oscar Payabyab**, since Dick G. was out of town. Also there were Batangas Gov. **Hermilando "Dodong" Mandanas**, **Dominador Ferrer** of the Intramuros Administration, **Amado Cruz**, president of the Offshore Development and Construction; and Miss Earth 2002 **Winnie Omwakme** from Kenya.

Incidentally, dahlings, Yolie was one of the judges in the Miss Earth 2003 Best National Costume portion.

Yolie confesses that she herself loves to get all dolled up. "I enjoy trying to surprise people at formal affairs, especially in Batangas (she's a Batangueña) by wearing a gown they would not have expected me to wear," she explained, laughing.

With her taste for drama and color, Yolie brings a great variety of merchandise to her night market in Intramuros, including, take note *palanggas*, embroidered and beaded fabrics from Mindanao, bead-and-stone trinkets from ethnic communities, wood and shell and stone handicrafts from all over the country, as well as clothes and fashion accessories; exotic plants and herbal medicines; and, for the holidays, Christmas décor, natch!

Check out these useful, stylish things at Yolie's *tiangge* in Intramuros as well as in the Robinsons malls in Metro Manila and other prestigious malls in the north.

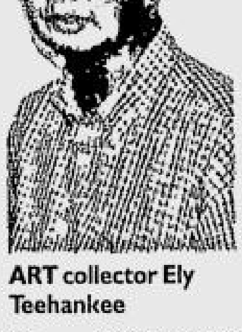
Early next year, you will see her "themed' *tiangge* at The Loft of Rockwell, no less.

Yes, *palanggas*, Yolie Balmes is indeed the kind of woman who knows what she wants and succeeds in it. No wonder her *tiangge* is going places, fast!

**"BARO"** publisher Gina de Venecia with special guests President Macapagal-Arroyo and Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando

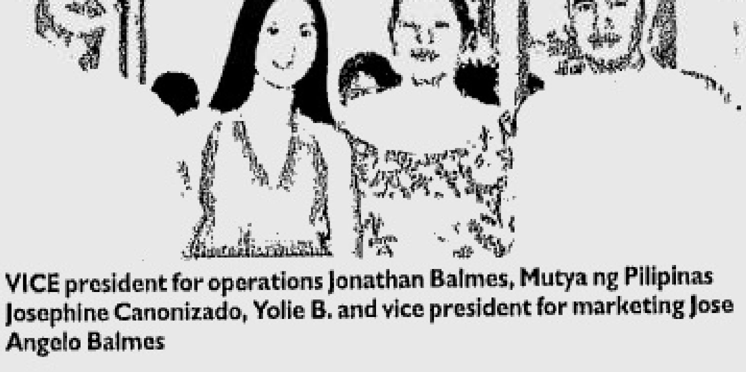
**SPANISH** Ambassador Ignacio Sagaz, artist of the hour Betsy Westendorp, Nedy Tantoco and Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco at the opening of Betsy's art exhibit at Galleria Duemila

**BEAUTIFUL** faces. Dianne Sison-Perez with her man, Illac Diaz



**ART** collector Ely Teehankee

**SNIPPING** the ceremonial ribbon at the "Wow na Wow Sale" in Intramuros: Bing Cruz, Dr. Yolie Balmes, Tourism Undersecretary Armand Arreza, Miss Earth Winnie Omwakme and Dominador Ferre of the Intramuros administration



**VICE** president for operations Jonathan Balmes, Mutya ng Pilipinas Josephine Canonizado, Yolie B. and vice president for marketing Jose Angelo Balmes

# Be a smart eater and live longer

**INSIDE OUT**

*Cory Quirino*

TIME magazine says it like it is. In its Dec. 8 cover story titled "The Secrets of Eating Smarter," it reveals the latest research on the best way to eat. Do you want to have the extensive feature reduced to one sentence? Here it is: If you want to live longer and lose weight, eat more vegetables and fruits, and exercise regularly.

## Just the beginning

I could very well end the column here, but let's try to get a deeper understanding of things. Truth is, we all have to eat to live. But what exactly are you eating?

Studies reveal that food has compounds called phytochemicals that boost the immune system. The best known are flavonoids (found in citrus fruits, grapes, onions, apples, pineapples), which researchers think may protect against cancer. Indoles (a kind of phytochemical) contained in broccoli and Brussels sprouts may protect against many chronic diseases.

Carotenoids have beta carotenes (converted into Vitamin A in the body) that give color to carrots, *camote*, squash and red, yellow and orange fruits and veggies. There are also lutein and zeaxan thin (green veggies) and lycopene (tomatoes) that may guard against coronary-artery disease, cataracts and cancer.

Isoflavones are plant estrogens (a woman's best friend). Soya, which has the health benefits of estrogens, helps alleviate menopausal symptoms, lower blood lipid levels and reduce the risk of hormone-related cancers of the ovaries, breast, endometrium (the mucus membrane lining the uterus) and prostate (good news for the men). If you don't like tofu, why not take soya as a beverage?

## Dispel the notion that...

**Fries are good for you.** While potato is low in fat (minus the extras like cheese, sour cream, butter, etc.), with all its toppings and oil, fries are calorie-loaded.

**All juices are equal.** Wrong. Fresh is better than canned. And if you are going to drink canned, take the unsweetened.

**Protein is a must.** While protein is good for you, a whole plate full of red meat is just too much. Go lean on all your meat; you don't need the extra fat. If meat has been the main event at mealtime, why not vary its use? Instead of steak, use meat as part of your pasta sauce. This way, you eat less of it.

**More is good.** Wrong. Too much is bad for you. As a rule, despite the countless popular diet fads that confuse you, just remember the maxim: "Everything in moderation."

**All fish is good for you.** Wrong. While seafood is the best choice for a low-fat diet (and omega 3 fatty acids), certain deep-sea fish like swordfish, marlin and shark and the popular salmon may be contaminated with toxins like lead and PCB (depends on where they come from). Safe till now are cod, *tilapia,* flounder, sardines and shellfish.

**Eggs are bad for you.** Wrong. Considered the complete protein, eggs are packed with Vitamins A, B-12, folic acid and riboflavin. They are affordable and convenient. But eggs contain twice the cholesterol of beef, so go easy on them. Three times weekly is enough.

**Variety is beneficial.** Right. Choose different ways to cook your meals. It is adventurous and appetizing.

**Fat is essential to good health.** True. While you are allowed 25-30 percent of fat in your meal, understanding their nature is good for you. Good fats (found in fish, walnuts, olive oil, avocados) improve cholesterol levels. There are two types of bad fats—saturated fat (red meat, butter, ice cream) that clog your arteries, and trans-fatty acids (hydrogenated oils, processed foods, margarine, commercially baked or fried foods, whole milk) that may be even more damaging to the body.

An interesting little known truth is out: "Studies are showing that people tend to be able to control their weight better over the long run on a moderate- or higher-fat diet than on a low-fat diet," according to Dr. Walter Willet, chair of the Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health. That's because people on a low-fat, high-carbo diet tend to get hungrier faster than those on a higher fat regimen.

## Nuttier is healthier

New studies reveal that a healthy eating plan that includes nuts can help trim the waistline. Nuts such as almonds, cashews, walnuts, peanuts are good sources of Vitamin E, reason enough for the American Heart Association to allow packages of nuts to carry the health claim: "May reduce the risk of heart disease." Imagine replacing pasta, rice and potatoes with nuts and imagine yourself with lower blood pressure and weight! Want to know the safe nibble limit? Twenty pieces of nuts will do—not a bowlful.

## Whole and wild

Wild rice (red, black, etc.) has more nutrients than white rice. Add more whole grains to your diet such as barley, wheat, bran. These are excellent sources of fiber and vitamins/minerals. But if you think your breakfast cereal is safe, look again; it's probably loaded with sugar. So you might as well opt for a bowl of old-fashioned oatmeal.

## The rule of five

Want a quick, easy guide to smart eating? Follow the rule of five—have at least five servings of any fruit/veggie daily. The latest nutritional research claims five is good, but nine is divine.

**Great shakes:**

1 whole apple, peeled and chopped
1 whole peeled carrot, shredded
4 tbsp of Nestlé Nutren (with fiber)
1 c of chilled water
½ tsp of honey

In a juicer, mix apple and carrot for 1 minute. Place all ingredients in a blender. Then drink up.

**Carrot facial:**

Leftover carrots can be used as a poultice. Wrap in hanky and apply onto a clean face by dabbing gently for 3 minutes. Smoothens the skin.

If you want to add years to your life, the only way is to add life to your years. So smile and invoke—love and light!

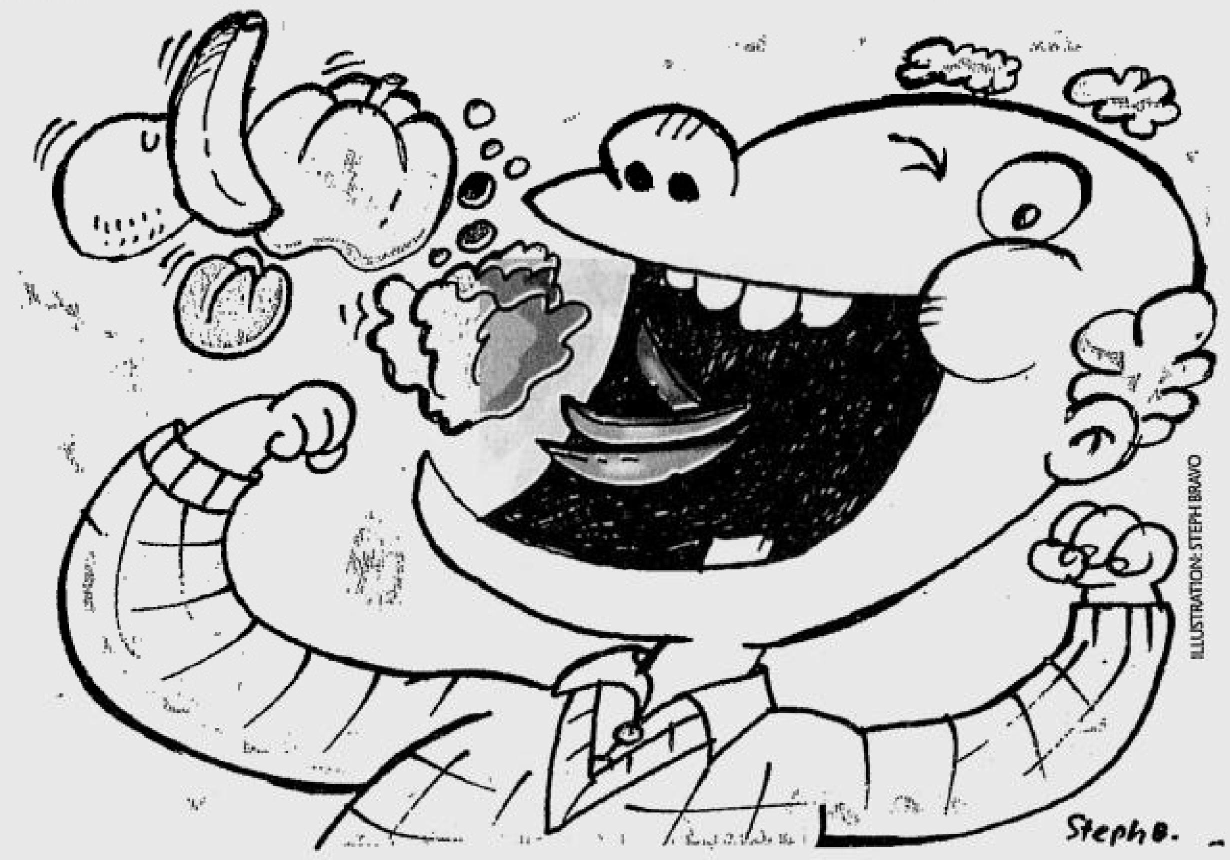


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

OUCH!

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The Philam Funds offer modern and smart ways to save or invest your hard-earned peso or dollar savings. They are mutual funds. It simply means that we gather individual savings or investments and invest them prudently as a group. Why? Because it usually takes a bigger amount or fund to get better earnings. Since no single average investor ever has enough money to invest for this purpose, 'mutual' funds are created in order to generate higher earnings for individuals and institutions. Imagine buying anything in bulk, you get discounts right? So the bigger the fund to invest, the more chances there are of getting the best deals and bigger earnings without compromising safety and security.

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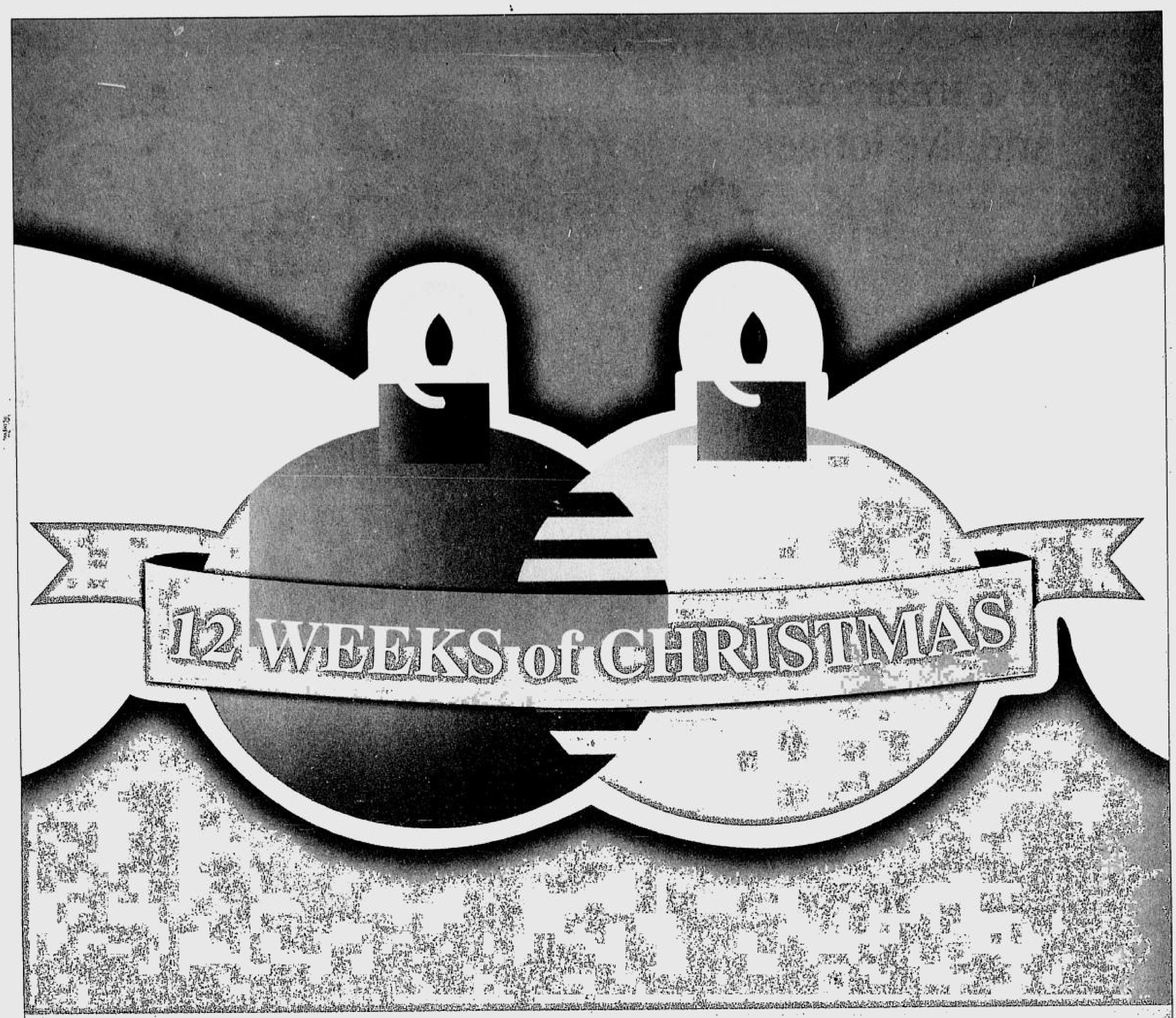

# We wish you 200,000!

## One more draw to go.

## Last draw is on January 16, 2004.

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THE ELEGANT facade of Raffles Hospital

THE LANDSCAPE Garden inside the hospital premises, where patients can enjoy fresh air and greenery

# Hospital care, hotel comfort

**Text and photos by Gibbs Cadiz**

STEP into the curb in front of the ochre-washed building along Singapore's North Bridge Road and you are greeted by a bowing, broadly smiling uniformed doorman.

Enter the automated glass doors and you find yourself in a chic, swanky lobby that could pass for the foyer of a first-class business hotel or a sleek office complex.

Occupying pride of place in this airy space is an arresting water sculpture, its soothing sounds providing accompaniment to a grand piano merrily tinkling by its lonesome on the side.

Ride the elevators to the various floors, and lose yourself in wide corridors with plush carpeting, walls rendered in restful beige and browns, and quiet corners strewn with comfy chairs, assorted magazines, even a colorful kiddie corner nearby.

RafflesHospital

HOTEL lobby? Nope, it's Raffles Hospital's ultra-sleek foyer. Note the grand piano.

An hour or two inside this elegant building and you're bound to forget you're in Raffles Hospital, one of Singapore's premier medical institutions and a vanguard in the nation's thrust to transform itself into the leading medical and health care hub in Asia.

"We call ourselves a 'hospi-tel,' a combination of hospital and hotel," says Liang Hwee Ting, manager for corporate communications of the Raffles Medical Group (RMG), the holding company that owns the hospital.

Raffles, a 380-bed tertiary hospital with a distinguished reputation in oncology and cardiology, is the flagship facility of RMG.

The group has 60 medical facilities in Singapore alone, and four in Hong Kong. It serves more than 4,500 corporate clients, over a million patients each year, and employs over 1,000 employees and 120 staff physicians.

Its preeminence has earned it the exclusive

HOSPITAL/ D4

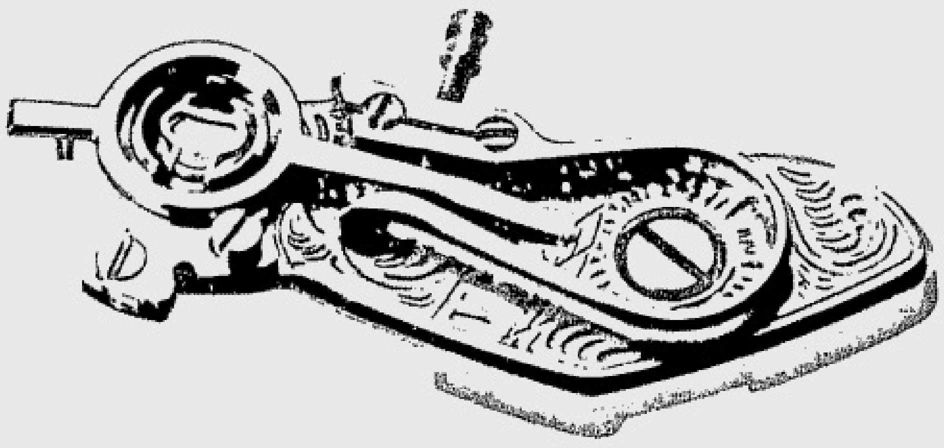
> Singapore's Raffles Hospital is one medical institution that tries hard not to feel like one

---

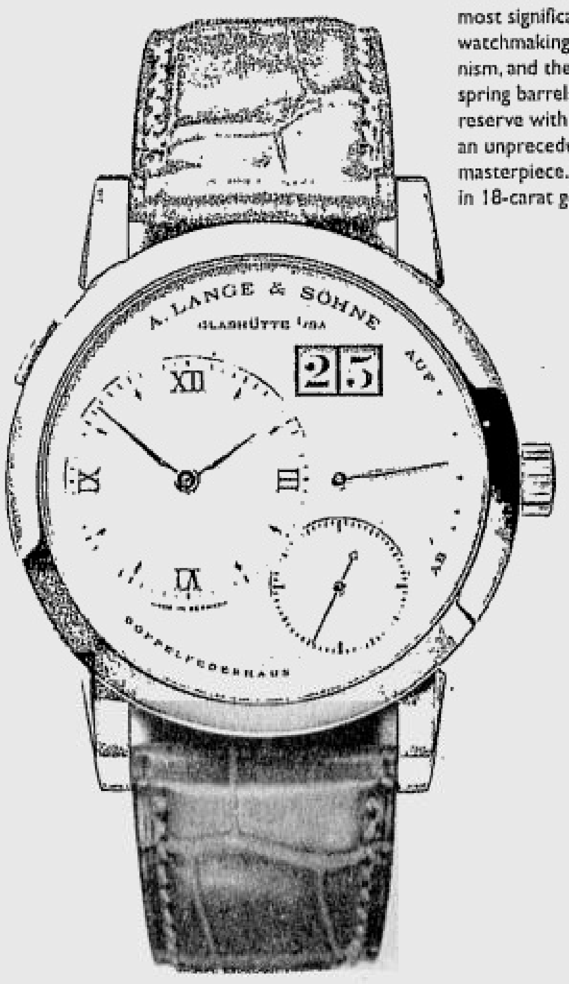
It would be a pity if you didn't look at the Lange 1 movement with a magnifying glass.

But you certainly don't need one to read its patented outsize date.

**The Lange 1's balance-cock.**
Lange's inimitable watchmaking skill in magnification: free-hand cutting by a master engraver makes every balance-cock unmistakably unique, and the patented whiplash precision index adjuster combines the aesthetic beauty of superb craftsmanship with Lange's watchmaking ingenuity. The result is technical and artistic perfection of a degree which can only be found in Lange watches.
The balance-cock full size:



**The Lange 1 with outsize date.**
One of mechanical watchmaking's most strikingly useful inventions allows for a date display three times the size of those on conventional wristwatches. The patented double-disc mechanism with over 40 individual components may be the most significant contemporary watchmaking innovation. This mechanism, and the distinctive twin mainspring barrels for three day's power reserve with indicator, makes for an unprecedented watchmaking masterpiece. The Lange 1 is available in 18-carat gold or in platinum.



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# Unexplained disappearance and reappearance

INNER AWARENESS

*Jaime T. Licauco*

OF all unusual phenomena I have investigated, some of the strangest are cases of physical disappearance of persons and their reappearance at times somewhere else.

The most recent is the case of a teenager from Legazpi City we shall call Orlando. Two years ago, when he was 14 years old, he was in the yard of their house in Bicol when he suddenly disappeared. His parents looked for him all over the place, but they could not find him. After about an hour of fruitless search, Orly was suddenly in exactly the same place where he was last seen.

When asked where he went, he replied, "I did not go anywhere. I was here all along." He thought he just fell asleep. He did not know he had physically disappeared and had no idea where he had been.

Now 16, the boy was involved in another strange incident, as related by his father to me. Orly fell asleep at 1 p.m. in his room. At 5 p.m., his father knocked on his door to wake him up, as they were going somewhere. When the boy did not open the door, the father got worried and broke the door. They found Orly lying in bed as if lifeless. He was not breathing and he looked ashen.

The father carried the limp body to bring it to the hospital. Along the way, the maid suggested that he bite his son's toe. His wife did and the boy woke up in a daze. When the family reached the hospital, Orly was awake.

## No medical reason

The doctors could not find anything physically wrong with the boy even after a thorough examination.

When asked what' happened, Orly said he left his physical body and was chased by a black being. As he was running away, another entity, a white one, held his arm and took him across a river where the black one did not dare follow. He then woke up. Orly is now afraid to sleep fearing another encounter with the black being.

I told the father negative spirits could be inhabiting their house in Legazpi. He confessed that several psychics and mediums had said so. They had the house blessed by a priest twice already, according to him. I said no amount of blessing by an ordinary priest could drive away evil spirits of that type. Blessings had no effect on them. A strong and real exorcist was needed.

## Agpaoa's disappearances

This reminds me of a case told to me by people who knew the late Filipino healer from Baguio City, Tony Agpaoa. They said when Tony was about two or three years old, he would disappear from his bed in the evening. He would be found the next morning on top of a big *caimito* tree in their yard.

This happened several times to the consternation of his parents. So, one evening, the family took turns watching the child while he slept. But the same thing happened. Tony disappeared although a member of the family was awake and watching him. They found him in the same tree outside the house.

> Elementals can take whoever they want and bring them anywhere

The family believed some friendly dwarves or elves took the boy to their kingdom while he slept. The boy grew up to be one of the most famous and powerful faith healers the country had known. Of course, he was also extremely controversial. He died in 1982 at the age of 42.

The technical term for this phenomenon is teleportation. It seems to be more common than many people realize. A recent case involved a female high school student of a Catholic school south of Manila.

Administrators of the school had been warned that *dwendes* did not want a building constructed atop their community or habitat. But it was the only available place. As the building's foundation was being dug, five students—two boys and three girls— were possessed by the elementals. Parents and priests did not know what to do.

I was asked by the Rector to see what could be done. I brought a well-known and powerful healer/exorcist. But a Spanish priest objected to lay people doing the exorcism.

## No protection

Before we left, we heard the following story from one of the parents:

The priests brought the five possessed students to the chapel to pray. They were all wearing a miraculous medal of the school, which was supposed to protect them from evil spirits. It proved to be useless. As the students entered the chapel with their parents and the priests, one of the girls disappeared before their eyes! They looked for her all over the chapel and outside, but there was no trace of her.

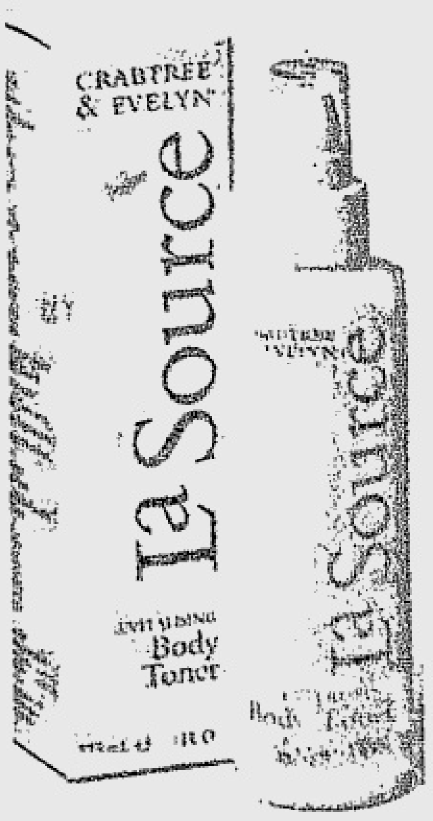
Shortly afterwards, a student came running to the chapel and told the stunned priests and parents, "It's Cynthia (the girl who disappeared). She's in the football field crying!" They all rushed to the football field and found Cynthia sitting on the ground crying loudly. She woke up in the field far from the chapel and panicked.

How that happened, nobody could tell. Of course, we know that elementals can do that. They can take physically whoever they want and bring them anywhere they want to.

Shakespeare said in "Hamlet," "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio/Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

*Note: Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City. Tel. nos.: 8107245 or 8926806 or e-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.*

# Rejuvenating holiday gifts



CRABTREE & Evelyn's La Source spa treatment products are perfect holiday gifts for loved ones.

La Source is designed to restore, condition and rejuvenate from head to toe. The products, with their nutrient-rich ingredients, promise to improve the texture and over-all glow of the skin in or outside the home.

When under the sun, use the nonabrasive La Source Exfoliating Soap that polishes and creates a natural healthy radiance.

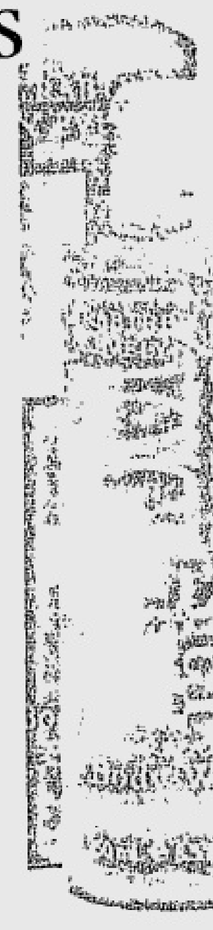
Follow it up with the La Source Body Toner that energizes and cools, while tightening the pores and helping produce a toned, fresh appearance.

The La Source Hydrating Body Silk will deliver much needed moisture minus the oily residue.

Even when land-locked, La Source cools and provides all the beneficial ingredients of seawater.

La Source products are conveniently designed with easy-to-carry applicators. They can be carried in purses to the gym or the office.

Crabtree & Evelyn branches are at the 2/L, SM Megamall Bldg. A; 2/L, Padre Faura Wing, Robinsons Place Manila; and Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center.



# *Triple holiday treat*

NU Skin Philippines, Inc. launched recently a triple holiday treat.

Throughout the holiday season, customers can enjoy a 30 percent discount on the Galvanic Spa System, which comes with a special gift box; a free Scion Hand Sanitizer for every purchase of an Epoch Baby Set; and a convenient gift box with a Nu Skin gift tag when they avail of the Nu Skin White System.

The Galvanic Spa System for pampering the skin consists of two easy processes, pretreatment and treatment stages, followed by the use of a spa instrument after each stage.

The treatment gel has magnesium to energize skin cells. It also has aspartate to help maintain balanced pH levels.

Expectant or new mothers can be given the Epoch Baby Set to help them care for babies. The baby line uses delicate and natural ingredients.

The Nu Skin White System set includes the White Skin Lotion, White Essence, White Milk Lotion and White UV Base that contain mulberry, licorice, bearberry and thea sinensis extract to help reduce skin discoloration; and Vitamin E to condition and hydrate the skin.

Contact Nu Skin's Distributor Hotline, 6890333 or log on to www.nuskin.com.ph.

Nu Skin White
Nu Skin White

# *Take Charge Doc!*

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

Rx MEDICard

**Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA.**

## FAQs (frequently asked questions)

***I am enrolled under plan Small Private. Will I incur excess charges and incremental cost when I am confined in a Large Private room?***

Incremental charges are applicable only when you are confined in a room category higher than what your plan covers. Thus, in the above situation, incremental cost does not apply only excess charges.

## Meet your MEDICard Team

Members in need of a surgeon's consultation at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City may visit **Dr. Francisco M. Peralta, Jr.** Dr. Peralta, a medicine graduate of the University of Santo Tomas, subspecializes in Thoracic and Cardiovascular surgery, which he took residency training from the Philippine Heart Center and Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery which he finished in the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. For your consultation needs, visit Dr. Peralta's clinic at S-903 CHB, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 AM to 1 PM.

At the World Citi Medical Center at Aurora Blvd., Quezon City, members can seek the services of Pediatrician **Dr. Rosalia C. Campo.** "Doktora Campo" was conferred doctor of Medicine at UERM-MMC and joined MEDICard in 1998. She is a Diplomate of the Philippine Pediatric Society and a member to both the Manila Medical Society and the Philippine Medical Association. During her off-clinic hours. she enjoys reading her favorite books and surfing the world wide web. For your consultation needs, visit her clinic every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 AM to 2 PM.

The medical coordinator is the head and team leader of all accredited doctors in a hospital. And **Dr. Basil Eric Tenorio** has been tasked to do this at the Taal Polymedic Hospital. Doc Eric is a doctor of medicine from UERM-MMC and specializes in Internal Medicine. He also subspecializes in the illness Diabetes. For all your medical needs at the hospital, look for medical coordinator Dr. Basil Tenorio. Taal Polymedic is located at the Diversion Road, Brgy. Carsuche, Taal. Batangas.

**We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.**

**For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 818-2161. For group or corporate membership, dial 812-8360, 817-5136 or 817-4985 and look for a membership consultant. For Cebu Sales Office call (032) 253-5031; For Davao Sales Office call (082) 224-6931/305-3386.**

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**MEDICard is the first HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asia Pacific Region to be ISO CERTIFIED**

# Visit Dr. Santa this Christmas

HEALTHWAY Medical Clinics makes visits to the doctor more fun for kids before Christmas.

Children who will visit Healthway for a medical checkup on the weekend before Christmas can enjoy free face-painting and listen to Dr. Santa's interesting Christmas stories as well as his talks on the value of good health. At the end of the checkup, the child will also get a Christmas gift from Healthway.

Parents can also pre-enroll their children to Healthway's first health card for kids, the Junior PrivilegeCard.

The card offers numerous benefits like unlimited free medical consultation with pediatrician and dentist, discounts on laboratory tests, dental procedures, vaccines and consultation. It has an annual coverage and offered at an affordable rate.

Call 8923731.

# *New center for obese patients*

ST. LUKE'S Medical Center has opened the first center in the country aimed at helping obese individuals who are at risk of weight-related diseases like diabetes, heart problems, cancer and hypertension.

The Endocrine, Metabolic and Diabetes Center has more than 20 consultants led by endocrinologist (an expert in the glands that produce hormones) Dr. Joselynna Quimpo.

Inaugurated simultaneously with the Weight Management Center, the new unit aims to provide a holistic approach to obesity and to educate the public through a comprehensive educational program on diabetes. It will also help with the fertility problems of overweight women who are having problems conceiving and menopausal patients who might need hormonal treatments. The center will also help people with thyroid problems.

The new center will work closely with the upcoming diabetic Foot and Wound Care Center to help improve management of foot care problems among diabetics and prevent limb amputation.

The centers will soon make its services and facilities available not only to its patients but also referrals.

Call St. Luke's Endocrine, Metabolic and Diabetes Center at 7230101 local 5210.

Cool Mint LISTERINE POCKETPAKS
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**COOL YULETIDE GIFT**

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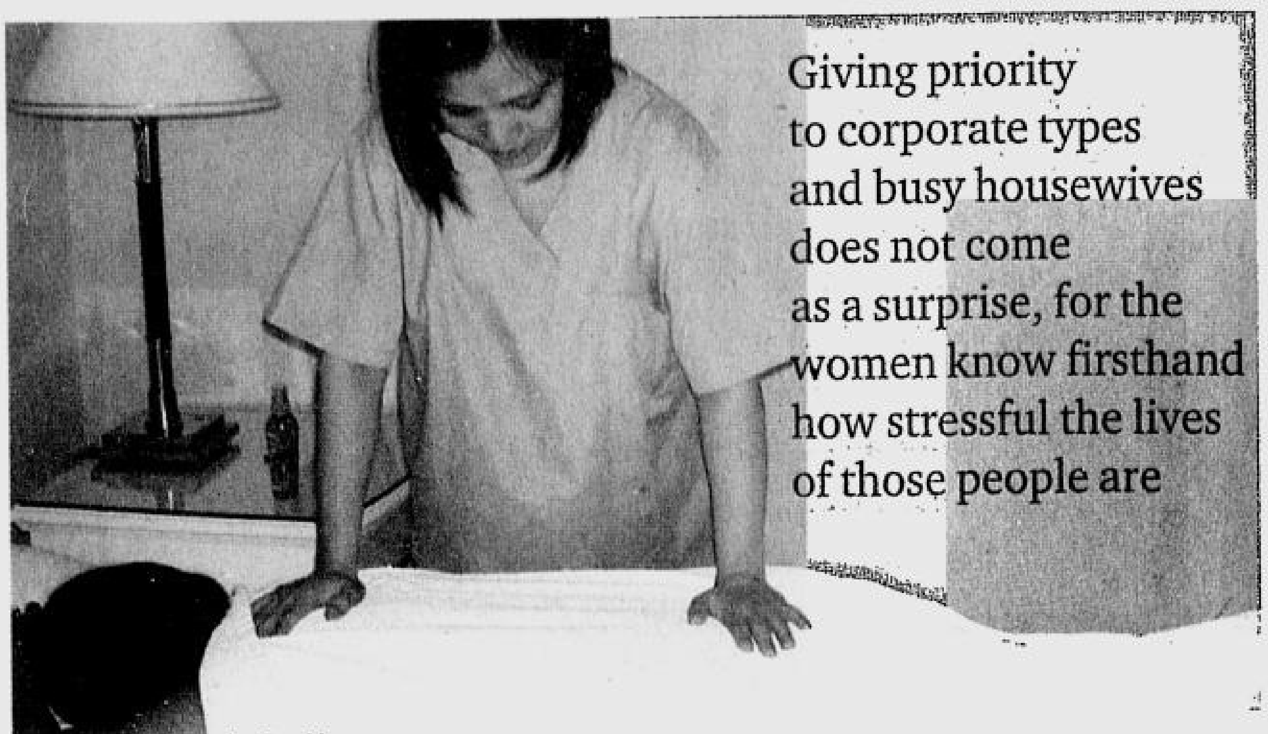


Giving priority to corporate types and busy housewives does not come as a surprise, for the women know firsthand how stressful the lives of those people are

**PHYSICAL** therapist Ann Vargas says clients find the IMG massage oil smoother and less greasy. The product is also gentler on the masseuse's hands.

**THE WOMEN** behind IMG: (Seated, from left) Joyce G. Moncupa, production expert; Joanna P. Jimenez, sales and customer service; (standing) Glecy S. de Leon, treasurer; Ma. Teresa J. Moncupa, president; and Arceli R. Francisco, vice president

# Enterprising housewives

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

FIVE women—bound by blood, friendship and affinity—have embarked on a bold new adventure that takes advantage of the growing popularity of aromatherapy and other de-stressing techniques.

The women—two sets of sisters and a sister-in-law—have launched their own modest, so far, line of massage oil and de-stressing spray, which they hope will become a preferred corporate giveaway as well as a gift to harassed business executives or housewives like themselves beginning this Christmas season.

Giving priority to corporate types and busy housewives does not come as a surprise, for the women know firsthand how stressful the lives of those people are. After all, they have businesses, aside from their new venture, and their own households to run.

They know that what busy people need most is something to calm and relax them even in the middle of a really hectic day. Aromatherapy is thus the way to go.

The women—Ma. Teresa J. Moncupa, her sister Joanna P. Jimenez, her sister-in-law Joyce G. Moncupa, her friend Arceli R. Francisco and her sister Glecy C. de Leon—call their enterprise Iamgreat, Inc. (IMG), as an expression of their belief that people have limitless potential for greatness.

With the help of a chemist friend, IMG developed the Anti-stress Spray combining essential oils from green tea, known to help clear the mind and provide a feeling of wellness with its fresh scent, and lavender, which induces calmness and relaxation.

While the spray is designed to be used anywhere anytime, IMG also developed its own massage oil, the Pampering Body Oil, probably the first in the local market to use pure virgin coconut oil, reputed to be rich in anti-oxidants that fight harmful substances in the environment, as base.

So far, it is available in only one scent, lavender, again to induce calmness and relaxation, which the partners know is what people want most at the end of a full day.

Other products IMG has come up with include hand-made soap, packaged with tea lights in a ceramic holder, and scented oil for burning that comes with a ceramic burner and candle.

## Cottage industry

Started only in September, IMG is still very much a cottage industry with the mixing and blending of ingredients done in the Parañaque home of Moncupa, its president. The group recruited out-of-school youth and housewives to help them with the work.

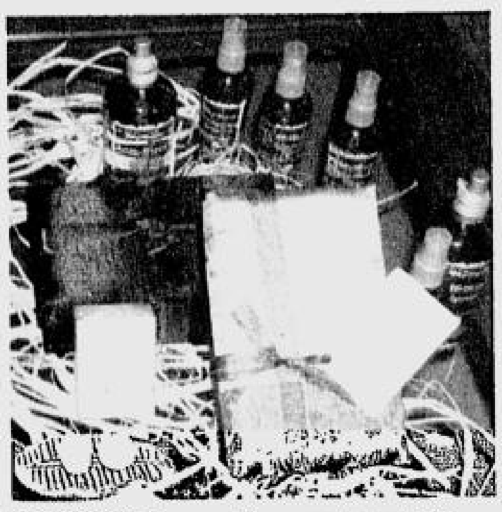
IMG is making its products available in opulent softly padded boxes of Chinese silk and shantung to take advantage of the gift-giving season, and particularly to get a slice of the corporate giveaway business.

The box, also done by out-of-school youth and housewives who get their raw materials from IMG, was designed by Moncupa, a former advertising executive who studied at the Philippine School for Interior Design, and can have other uses.

Although news about IMG's products has so far spread only through word of mouth, the partners are quite gratified by the favorable response they have been getting, including orders from corporations.

The massage oil, being used in Francisco's Masahe ni Ate Home Service Massage, a membership service available to residents in her village, has been particularly well-received. Clients not only want it used when they have a massage but they also buy the product.

Even the masseuses like the oil.



**THE WHOLE** range of Iamgreat products includes anti-stress spray of green tea and lavender, massage oil of coconut oil and lavender, hand-made soap, candles and scented oil.

**IAMGREAT** products are available in softly padded multi-use boxes of Chinese silk and shantung.

Gina Cameja, who is studying to be a caregiver in Francisco's Sta. Mikaela Training Center, and Ann Vargas, who supervises the on-the job-training of students, said the oil was easy to apply and smoother than some products they had used before. Having to attend to at least three clients in one day, they were particularly pleased that the oil was gentle on their hands.

The IMG anti-stress spray is available in 100 mg. (P150) and 200 mg (P250), while the massage oil only comes in bottles of 100 mg (P150). A box containing a 100 mg. bottle of anti-stress spray and 100 mg. of massage oil costs P450. In a box, the 200 mg. anti-stress spray costs P500. A box containing a bar of hand-made soap and candles with ceramic holder costs P225, while a 10 m. vial of scented oil, burner and tea light costs P350.

*IMG may be reached at 4268858, 8200342 or 8295125.*

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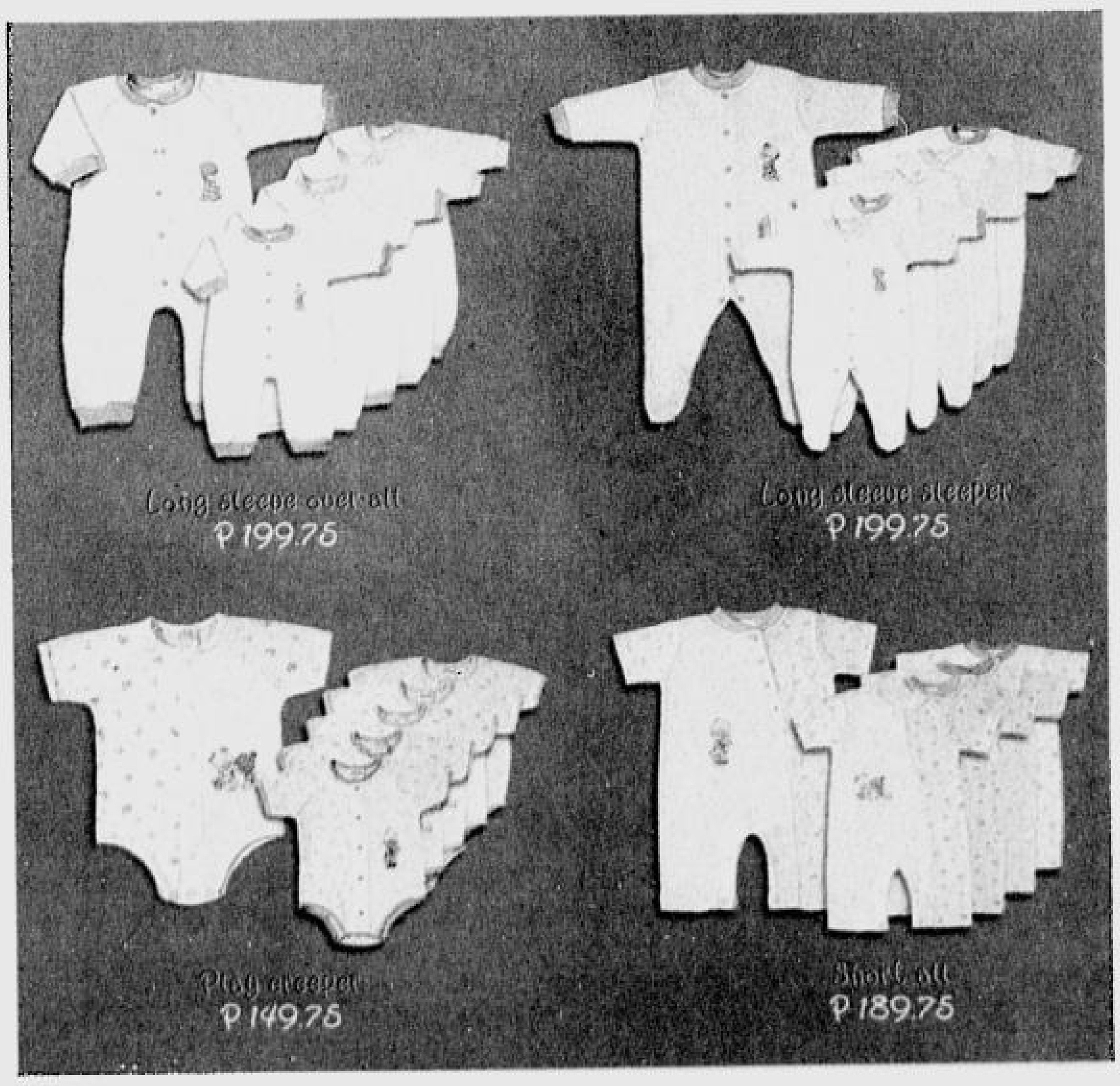

# Hospital care, hotel comfort

From page D1

license to provide medical services to Singapore's Changi Airport as well as Hong Kong's Chek Lap Kok airport, two of the world's busiest transit points.

Since 1997, RMG has also been publicly listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange. Not bad for a health care company that began 27 years ago with only two clinics dispensing general practice medicine.

"Even now, we still have many general practice clinics all over Singapore," says Liang. "But we're also building our reputation as an international center of medical excellence."

## Trailblazing

That drive for excellence explains the luxurious, hotel-like ambience of Raffles Hospital, its calculated move to ditch the usual hospital trappings in favor of trailblazing standards in medical and health care.

**THE WAITING** areas are awash in soft, restful colors and comfy chairs.

"This is one hospital that doesn't even smell like a hospital," notes Dr. Prem Kumar Nair, general manager for corporate services. "We consciously did not want white walls and surroundings that smelled of antiseptic. The full carpeting makes it harder to clean, but we try our best to maintain a healthy environment—with a difference."

The piano, for instance. "Our idea for a piano in the lobby was to help doctors, patients and visitors relax," says Nair. "As you can see, our first floor also has cafés and food outlets which are open to the public. It's like a mall where anyone can come in, eat and relax. The piano gives a softer touch to the hospital. Good thing there's a software now that you can just plug in, and the thing will play by itself!"

Raffles' insistence on doing things differently is born not only out of a sense of altruism; competition in Singapore's medical industry is stiff. The nation's legendary fastidiousness and world-class yardsticks extend to its health-care services.

The hospital's airport clinic, for one, has had to work out with other agencies concerned—the tourism board, airport personnel and hotel association, among others—a seamless protocol for handling foreign patients flying into Singapore for treatment.

**FINE** curtains, carpeted floors and muted lighting in a typical room

**THE ANTEROOM** of a single-bed suite, done like an intimate sala

Once the patient's plane touches down, the hospital's International Patients Center dispatches doctors and aides aboard an oversized golf buggy equipped with a stretcher and first aid facilities. The patient is then whisked past customs and arrival dockets straight to a waiting ambulance, then to Raffles Hospital.

In the meantime, other staff help arrange the patient's arrival papers and accommodations, take care of such travel minutiae as currency exchange and concierge services, and even provide interpreters to help the patient relax and feel at home.

## Trendy ambience

The pampering isn't confined to stay-in patients. Office personnel dropping by for a routine health maintenance check-up, for example, are treated to a free buffet breakfast at the hospital's well-appointed Executive Center.

The office has large waiting areas where visitors can sink into easy chairs, read or chat with each other while munching on food, or simply soak in the area's trendy look and feel.

Colorful modernist paintings adorn the walls, stylish bar stools and tables line one corner, and the area itself is so designed that visitors feel free to chatter in an animated, even loud manner without being hushed by hospital aides. Patients' rooms, naturally, are well-situated in discreet, off-limits areas.

The rooms themselves are the best example of the hospital's hotel orientation. Rather than being one whole chunk of astringent space defined by an imposing hospital bed, a typical unit is divided into a bedroom and a small sala provided with sofas, a television set, reading materials, soft lighting and graceful drapes in calming colors.

The overall effect is cozy, restful—a great inducement to healing.

A single-bed Victoria suite like this, says Liang, will cost from S$1,500 to S$2,000 a night (P45,000-P62,000). Those with lesser budgets can opt for two-bed or four-bed ward rooms. But while patients may end up sharing the space, the room's hotel ambience remains the same.

## High profile

All these efforts have made Raffles Hospital a well-regarded name in the field. In the last few months, especially, it has commanded the world spotlight via two high-profile separation surgeries of conjoined twins.

It was Raffles that operated on the 29-year-old Iranian twins Ladan and Laleh Bijani, a complex and high-risk surgery that was closely followed by world media.

The twins didn't make it—a result, medical experts say, of their advanced age and the extraordinary difficulty of separating upper body organs already tightly interlocked, which diminished the twins' chances of survival.

The hospital has had a better record separating one more pair of conjoined twins, this time Korean baby girls who underwent spinal column separation in July this year. The twins are now back in Seoul, South Korea.

In 2006, Raffles is set to break new ground as the exclusive medical provider of the newly opened Hong Kong Disneyland.

There, with Mickey Mouse and Goofy, expect to be greeted by a bowing, broadly smiling uniformed doorman leading you to your "hospi-tel."

*Raffles International Patients Center may be reached at (65) 63111666 or SingHealth International Medical Service at (65) 63265656. E-mail ims@sgh.com.sg or visit www.singaporemedicine.com*

*E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph*

**CORRIDORS** (above) and quiet corners are guest-friendly, with easy chairs, assorted magazines, even a colorful kiddie corner nearby (left).

Eastwood City Walk

Taking You Higher and Higher this December

Get carried away with surprise after surprise at the Eastwood City Walk this December. From treasure troves of the best bargains to musical extravaganzas, from spectacular fireworks shows to an electrifying New Year's eve celebration, raise your spirits higher... and higher!

Christmas Concert at the Plaza

Fine dining takes on a truly holiday flavor as quartets play classic Christmas favorites nightly using a variety of instruments.

**Dec. 9** Philmusica Woodwind Quartet
**Dec. 10** Austruck String Quartet
**Dec. 11** Philmusica Woodwind Quartet
**Dec. 12** Octokanto Guitar Quartet
**Dec. 13** Austruck String Quartet

*Time:* 7 pm to 9 pm
*Venue:* Central Plaza (Eastwood City Walk 1)

Weekend Fireworks Display

This December, weekends at Eastwood City will bring a spectacle on high. Gather your family and watch as the skies burst into glorious fountains of colors.

*Date:* All Fri. and Sat. of Dec.
*Time:* 10 pm

Serenades of the Season

Feel nostalgic as Voices and Eight of December take turns making the rounds of restaurants to sing carols of Christmas past and present. Watch for announcements of the choirs' schedule at the entrances of City Walk 1 and 2.

*Date:* Dec. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
*Time:* 7 pm to 9 pm

Symphony under the Stars

The 55-piece Manila Symphony Orchestra weaves holiday magic with an outdoor rendition of beloved Christmas hymns.

*Date:* Dec. 19 and 20
*Time:* 7 pm onwards
*Venue:* Central Plaza (Eastwood City Walk 1)

4-part Holiday Harmony

Chill out as the local music scene's most-wanted performers, **Paolo Santos, Jimmy Bondoc, Nyoy Volante and Nina,** gather in a rare one-night concert at the new City Walk 2.

*Date:* Dec. 20
*Time:* 8 pm onwards

Eastwood Christmas Bazaar

Fabulous gift ideas abound at the Eastwood Christmas Bazaar. From Dad's silk ties to Mom's coveted pendants, you're sure to find something for everybody!

*Date:* Dec. 11-17 ( Batch 1) Dec. 18-24 ( Batch 2)
*Time:* 11 am to 12 mn
*Venue:* Eastwood City Walk 2

New Year's Eve Countdown

Give 2004 a high-adrenaline welcome amid live band music. Be there as the clock at the new Eastwood City Walk Clock Tower strikes the first minute of the new year.

*Date:* Dec. 31
*Time:* 9 pm onwards
*Venue:* Central Plaza (Eastwood City Walk 1)

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